

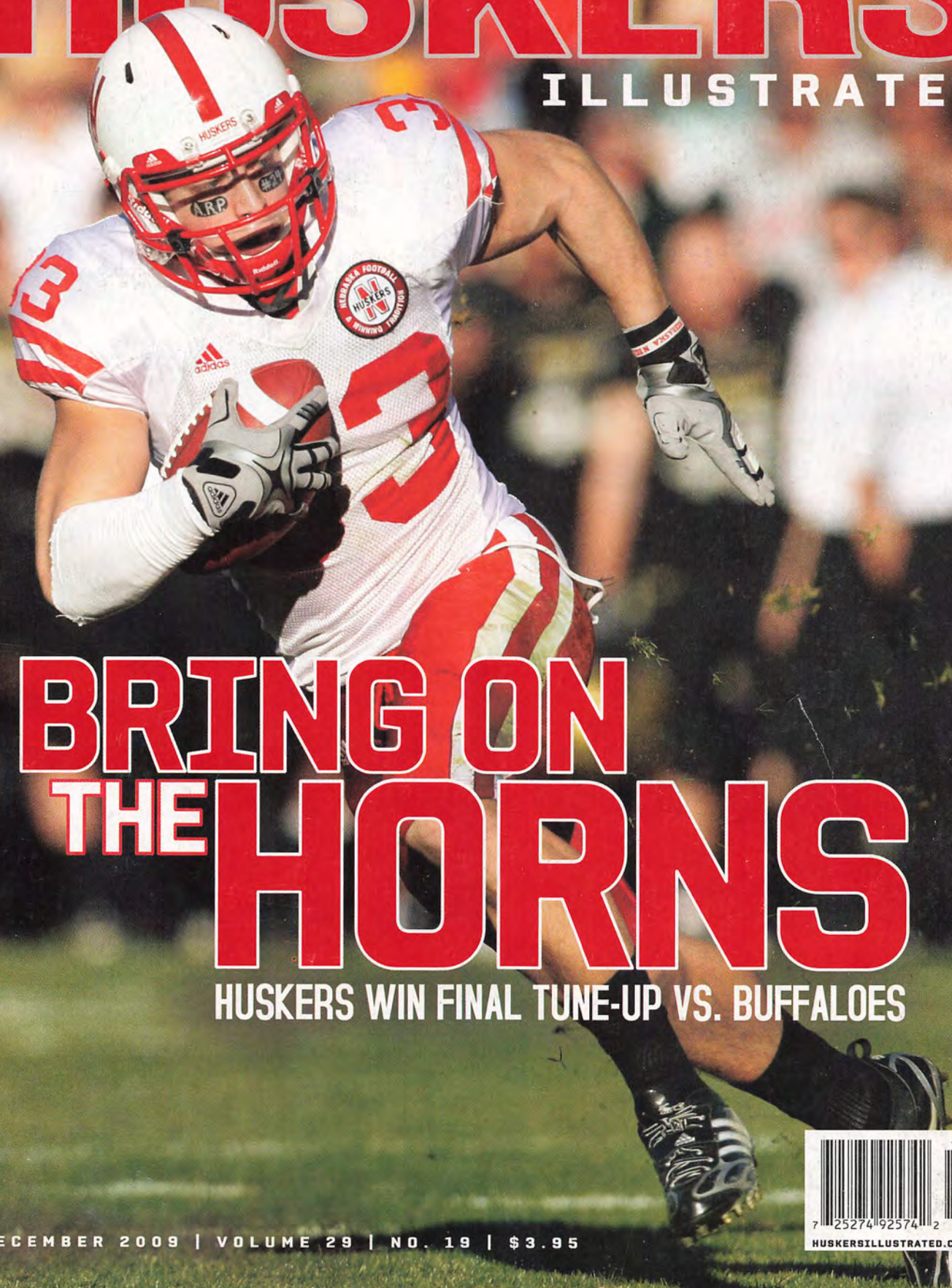
BIG 12 CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEW



THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO NEBRASKA ATHLETICS

# HUSKERS

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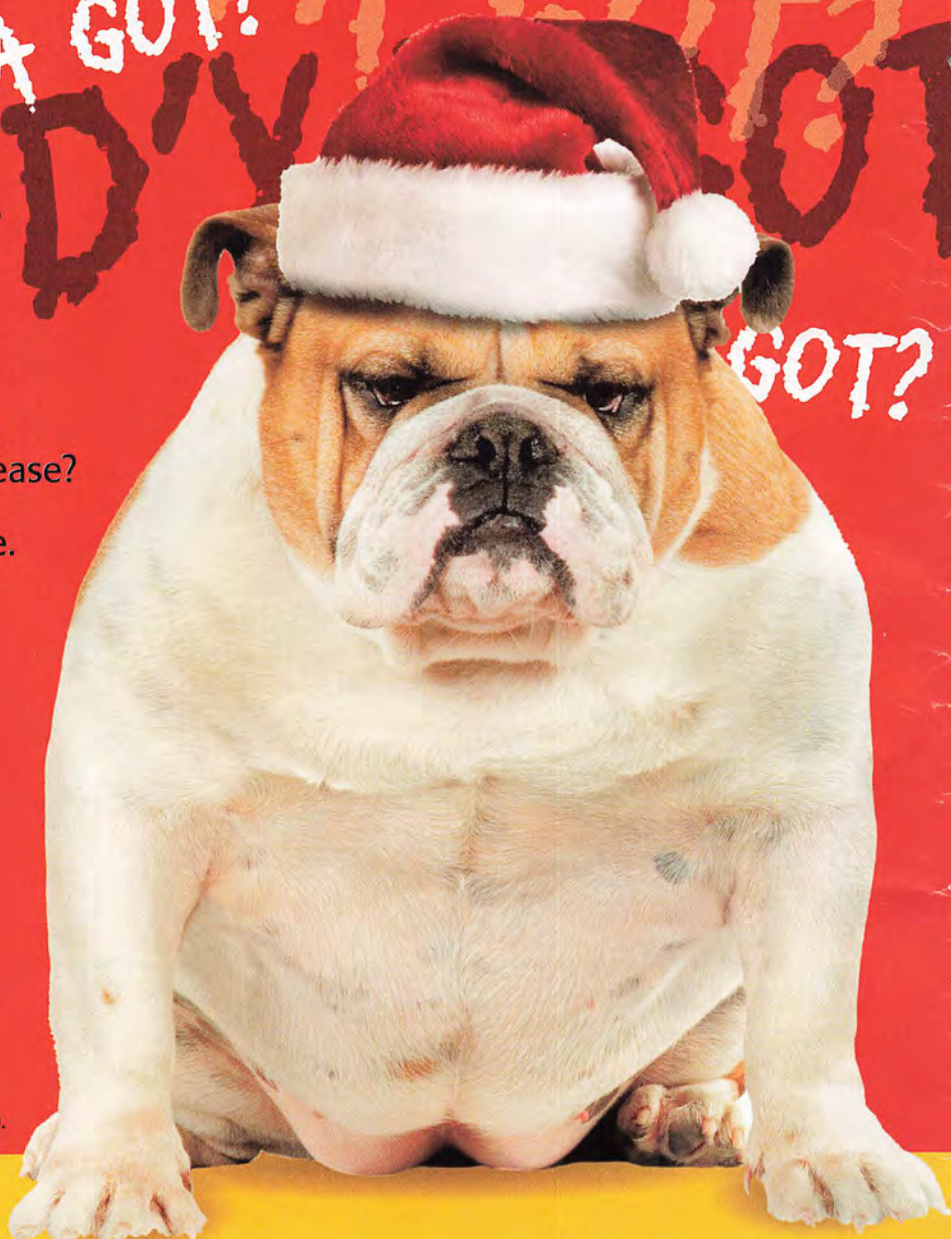


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# HUSKERS

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DECEMBER, 2009 • VOLUME 29 • NO. 19

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Volume 30, Issue 1 recapping the Big 12 Championship game will be mailed on Monday, Dec. 14. Check for updates at [huskersillustrated.com](http://huskersillustrated.com).

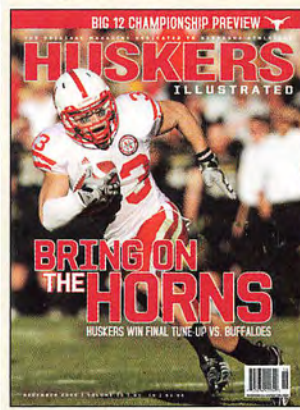
## HUSKERS

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### ON THE COVER

Senior defensive back Matt O'Hanlon returns an interception for a touchdown in the second quarter, giving Nebraska a 21-7 lead en route to a 28-20 win over Colorado. The Huskers will face Texas in the Big 12 Championship game.

Photo by Scott Bruhn





## NO COMPLAINTS

### Huskers pile up key numbers

**IF YOU HAVE** complaints about this year's Husker football team, please take them somewhere else. I really don't want to hear them.

I've been amazed by the chirping from Husker fans over the past few weeks. I actually saw a message board post from some fan wanting members of this coaching staff fired.

And while Internet message boards are hardly the place to look for the voice of reason, they do represent at least a portion of a fan base.

Some fans look to friends and co-workers to vent their frustrations. Others flock to the Internet to purge their emotions.

Either way, there's a collection of fans that always find fault. They freak out after a loss. They call for major changes within the program. When the offense struggles, they want a new offensive coordinator. The defense forces turnovers and fans cry about the yardage surrendered.

Obviously this doesn't apply to everyone. And I understand that part of being a fan is the right to criticize your own team. I get that.

But if you've found yourself complaining in recent weeks, stop for a second. Stop and think of what this team has accomplished.

This team has won nine games for the second straight season. Do you realize that Tom Osborne had to win bowl games in four of his first five seasons to reach nine



wins? This year's team has done it with two games to play.

What the Huskers have accomplished this season is remarkable. This team lost its record-setting quarterback, two of the program's best receivers and still won the Big 12 North.

Do you realize the Huskers went 4-0 on the road in conference play for the first time since 1997? In fact, Pelini has directed the Huskers to a 6-2 Big 12 road record and an 8-2 mark against Northern Division opponents.

Still feel like complaining? Let's put it in perspective. Nebraska was 12-8 against the North in four seasons under Bill Callahan and was just 5-11 in Big 12 road games, including a pair of 0-4 road records.

These are the numbers that count - wins and losses. Points and yardage just don't matter.

Offensive Coordinator Shawn Watson said it best.

"It's not romantic and you aren't going to get any style points for it... You want to do all these things, but hey, it's working. I can't apologize for 9-3 man, I can't."

I'm not saying fans can't be critical. But how can you complain about 9-3? **N**

*Send me your comments or story ideas to [aaron@huskersillustrated.com](mailto:aaron@huskersillustrated.com).*

**EDITOR,  
GENERAL MANAGER**  
Aaron Babcock

**CONTRIBUTING EDITOR**  
Mike Babcock

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**  
Mike Babcock, Terry Douglass, John Talman,  
Sean Callahan, Curt McKeever, Steve Sipple,  
Brian Rosenthal, Randy York, Bob Hamar,  
Rick Shaw, Sean Stevens, Mike Matya  
Tommy Dahlk, Joe Ganz

**CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS**  
Scott Bruhn, NU Sports Information,  
Aaron Babcock, Randy Hampton  
and Rivals.com

**SPORTS MARKETING  
& ADVERTISING DIRECTOR**  
Tim Francis (800) 524-9527, ext. 111

**NATIONAL DISTRIBUTOR**  
G Associates, Inc.

**Huskers Illustrated** (ISSN 0279-3474) is published monthly January through May and August, bi-monthly June/July and weekly September through mid-December, except open football dates. Single issue cost \$3.95 (yearbook \$9.95); subscription rate for one year (19 issues) is \$51.95. First Class postage is available for an additional charge of \$19 per year. Foreign postage is \$34.

**Huskers Illustrated** is published by Landmark Community Newspapers, 2623 Regency Rd., Lexington, KY 40503. Periodicals postage paid at Lexington, KY, and additional mailing offices.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to Huskers Illustrated, 7755 S. 23rd St., Lincoln, NE 68512.

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For subscription inquiries, mail to Huskers Illustrated, 2623 Regency Rd., Lexington, KY 40503. Allow four to six weeks for response. Give old and new addresses and enclose latest mailing address label when writing about your subscription.

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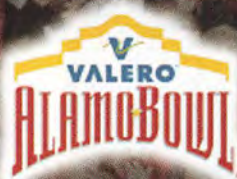
**E-MAIL ADDRESSES**  
**Editorial:** [huskersillustrated@gmail.com](mailto:huskersillustrated@gmail.com)  
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**T**he last time Nebraska played in the Big 12 Championship game was Dec. 2, 2006. **NDAMUKONG SUH** remembers. It was “super-cold” at Kansas City’s Arrowhead Stadium.

Temperature at kickoff was 28 degrees. “I think we just got done with an ice storm, so it definitely would be nice to be down in Texas somewhere, a little bit warmer. It’s starting to get cold here,” Suh said

He said “would be” instead of “will be” because he was speaking before the 17-3 victory against Kansas State that earned Nebraska a fourth trip to the conference championship game.

And he wasn’t looking ahead. Rather, he was responding to a question.

“It’s a great way for this senior

group and class to be able to have that opportunity,” said Suh. “And then, obviously, if we take care of business, we’re in a BCS game.”

The Cornhuskers haven’t played in a BCS game since 2001. Suh was about to turn 14-years-old back then. And he was still developing a passion for football, after growing up with soccer.

But enough of BCS bowls. Nebraska must first deal with Texas, which went into its final regular-season game against Texas A&M on Thanksgiving Day ranked No. 3 nationally.

The Longhorns had positioned themselves to

play for the national championship.

The Big 12 Championship game had no national title implications for either team in 2006. Nebraska would have played Texas, if the Longhorns hadn’t been upset by Texas A&M on the day after Thanksgiving. The Cornhuskers played Oklahoma, instead – and lost 21-7.

Suh started for the first time at

Nebraska that night.

The Cornhuskers opened in their goal-line defense, and Suh – a redshirted freshman – replaced a linebacker.

The reason for the alignment was the story of the game. On

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Ndamukong Suh made his first career start in the Big 12 Championship game on Dec. 2, 2006.**



# 2MinuteDrill



## TUCK AND RUN

Quarterback Zac Lee has done more running since the Kansas game. That's no surprise. "I think it's as simple as just challenging (him)," offensive coordinator Shawn Watson said. "You guys heard me say before I think what happens to a younger . . . especially a quarterback, they try to . . . all of a sudden, 'OK, I'm the starter, now I've got to be a passer.'

"One of the things that was so attractive about Zac coming out of junior college was his ability to run. And we've had some real heart-to-hearts about that. He's got to pull that ball down and go with it because it's an attribute he brings to the table a lot of guys don't. He can hurt a defense."

Nebraska's first play from scrimmage, **ZAC TAYLOR**, the Big 12 Offensive Player of the Year, passed to **MAURICE PURIFY**, who fumbled at his own 10-yard line. Oklahoma's **REGGIE SMITH** picked up the ball and carried it to the 2-yard line.

The play was reviewed. Then the Sooners' **PATRICK ALLEN** carried into the end zone.

Just 48 seconds had elapsed, and Nebraska trailed 7-0.

Oklahoma scored again on a 66-yard touchdown pass with 5:35 remaining in the first quarter, for all the points it needed. Nebraska ran more plays in the game (71) and finished with more total yards (366). But the Cornhuskers turned over the ball

five times to Oklahoma's one.

Only three other current Cornhuskers played in that game. **ANDY CHRISTENSEN**, who is in his sixth season, started at left guard. **BARRY TURNER** was a back-up defensive end. And **RICKEY THENARSE**, who has been lost for the season, was a back-up defensive back and special teams player.

Regardless of the outcome, the trip to the Big 12 Championship game is a "pretty big symbol," Suh said. "It's on the way of meaning that you're starting to put things together and getting into the games that you're supposed to be in, as Nebraska has always been a team that's supposed to be in early-December games . . . and early January games as well."



## NO COACHING ITCH

Kansas State's **BILL SNYDER** returned to the sideline to coach this season and had the Wildcats a victory against Nebraska away from playing in the Big 12 Championship game. The week of the Kansas State game, Cornhusker Athletic Director **TOM OSBORNE** was asked if he had the itch to coach again. "Not so much anymore," he said. "The first two or three years out of coaching (it) was hard. I think most every coach will tell you that. It's very difficult. But I'm at a point where I've got plenty of other things to worry about, and so I don't have any great desire to go out there and coach again."

As for Snyder's return, a year ago "I'd heard rumors that he was going to go back and coach, and as I talked to him, I began to realize, yeh, this guy probably will because, you know, I think he was still in that three-year period or so, and I think he missed it a lot," Osborne said.

"It's been his whole life, and he's a very dedicated guy. He's done a great job, so I admire him."



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## NO LOOKING AHEAD

The Cornhuskers weren't looking past Colorado to the Big 12 Championship game, not if coach **BO PELINI** had anything to say about it. "Texas, that means nothing to me right now," he said on the Monday before the Colorado game. "The only thing that matters to this football team is Colorado. I told our people in the offices, the coaching staff, I don't want to hear about plans, about travel plans, about tickets, or anything else about the Big 12 title game. That means nothing. That time will come."

## NU IN THE TITLE GAME

Nebraska will be playing in the Big 12 Championship game for the fifth time. The

Cornhuskers played in the first two (see Games Remembered for a recap of the first).

Nebraska is 2-0 in championship games played in Texas, 0-2 played elsewhere.

1996, at St. Louis: Texas 37, Nebraska 27

1997, at San Antonio: Nebraska 54, Texas A&M 15

1999, at San Antonio: Nebraska 22, Texas 6

2006, at Kansas City: Oklahoma 21, Nebraska 7

## FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

An incentive in coach Bo Pelini's contract pays him \$150,000 if the Cornhuskers play in the Big 12 Championship game. And if they were to win it, he would earn another \$100,000.

## SIDELINES



### AWARDS UPDATE

Senior defensive tackle **NDAMUKONG SUH** was among three finalists for the Outland Trophy, announced the week of the Colorado game. The others were Oklahoma State offensive tackle **RUSSELL OKUNG** and Idaho offensive guard **MIKE IUPATI**.

Suh also was named among three finalists for the Chuck Bednarik Award, along with defensive lineman **TERRENCE CODY** of Alabama and linebacker **BRANDON SPIKES** of Florida.

Previously, Suh was named among four finalists for the Rotary Lombardi Award and one of five finalists for the Bronko Nagurski Trophy. Winners of the awards will be announced Dec. 10.

In addition, Suh was named the Lott Trophy IMPACT Defensive Player of the Week following the Kansas State game. It was the third time this season he had earned the award, a first in the history of the award. As a result, Suh was expected to be among the finalists for the Lott Trophy.

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## Osborne downplays offensive involvement

**T**OM OSBORNE was surrounded by reporters after a practice before Nebraska's final home game against Kansas State. He tried to shield his eyes from the bright light on a television camera.

"Geez, I thought I was done with that," he said.

Before proceeding, Osborne glanced over the reporters, to where Cornhusker defensive coordinator **CARL PELINI** was speaking to a smaller group of media types.

"Get 'em all here," said Osborne. "Wait 'til Carl's done."

As if on cue, the rest left Pelini and joined the group around Osborne.

Following Nebraska's 31-17 victory at Kansas, offensive coordinator **SHAWN WATSON** had credited Osborne with providing advice that led to the Cornhuskers' success with, among other things, play-action passes. Watson's comments had led to Osborne's addressing reporters.

"Three or four of you called and wanted to do individual interviews, so I thought it would be better just to do it all at one time than to do it piece-meal and have four or five different stories come out," Osborne said. "As you know, then sometimes you get very different versions."

OK, so about the advice he offered Watson, his involvement with the offense...

"The sad answer is very, very, very little," Osborne said. "When you see an offense out there, it's **SHAWN WATSON**, the offensive coaches and **BO (PELINI)** certainly has some input there, too."

"Those guys know what they're doing, and I guess if I serve any purpose here, it's that I've been there. I've been there when we've had a bunch of fumbles and we've lost some tough games. So I think the coaches understand that I understand what they're going through."

That was the basis for his advice to Watson.

"You know, there's a few things they've (coaches) been trying to do that I've had some experience with, and so if they have a question, I'll give them my best answer," said Osborne.

"But really, I don't want anybody to feel, as they look out there on that field, that somehow that's something that I've had any major involvement. I think they've made decisions based on personnel, on how things are going. And so it isn't me going in and telling somebody, 'Well, you need to change this or that' or change the structure of the offense because I really haven't done that."

Typically, a coach will ask him for advice, Osborne said; he doesn't initiate the

discussion.

"I don't want to over-emphasize my involvement because it really is very minimal," the Hall of Fame coach said. "I just want to make sure everybody understands that I'm not sitting up there, drawing plays and saying, 'You gotta do this or play this guy.' That's just not part of it."

Osborne was asked about all the media attention his remarks had drawn.

"You guys have got to have something to talk about and write about, so I understand how it works here," he said. "You guys have a tough job because you've got to probably come up with something every day. I was just (that something) the day whenever that broke, so...that's why I'm here."

He quickly added: "You will not see me again this year."

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## LONG ODDS

Senior safety **MATT O'HANLON** wasn't recruited as a walk-on. You know his story. He gave up a scholarship at South Dakota, enrolled at Nebraska and went through a football tryout, involving what he remembers as 50 or 60 other hopefuls. He was the only one who earned an opportunity.

"It depends on the guy. If somebody shows the ability to play here and exhibits to us that he wants to have an opportunity to get on the field, we bring them in and give them an opportunity," coach **BO PELINI** said of the tryouts. "They have to be prepared when they come for the workout.

"As of late, most of our walk-ons have come from being invited walk-ons...I can't think off the top of my head how it's gone

because we have had a number of them (from tryouts). Some of them don't truly understand what they are walking into when they come to that workout."

The tryouts will continue, Pelini said.

## RESILIENCY

After Nebraska's school-record eight turnovers against Iowa State, receivers coach **TED GILMORE** was asked if the repeated mistakes might have gotten in players' heads.

"You hope not, but I think it exists," he said. "Some young men have the ability to flush one play and move on to the next. You have to be able to do that. Some better at it than others? I would say yes."

## SIDELINES

### GOT A TICKET, NEED A TICKET

Nebraska was allotted 11,909 tickets for the Big 12 Championship game. Donors were allowed to purchase tickets from the allotment first and bought nearly 11,000, leaving about 1,000 for the general public. Those tickets went on sale the Tuesday before Thanksgiving – and were gone in 15 minutes.

### COTTON BOWL CONSIDERATION

Even though the Cornhuskers could be a candidate for the Cotton Bowl, particularly if Oklahoma State were to earn a BCS at-large bid (the Cowboys would have had to defeat Oklahoma for that to happen), there was concern by the Cotton Bowl that Nebraska fans wouldn't return to Dallas, after going there for the Big 12 Championship game, less than a month before.

### NEVER RELAX

**BO PELINI'S** coaching philosophy doesn't allow for complacency. Even the best players are one practice away from demotion. "Our guys know that's our culture," Pelini said.

"Our guys know that to play you have to practice well. You have to perform on the field. There doesn't have to be a lot of words spoken. Our guys know that's the way it is, and the way it will always be as long as this coaching staff is here."



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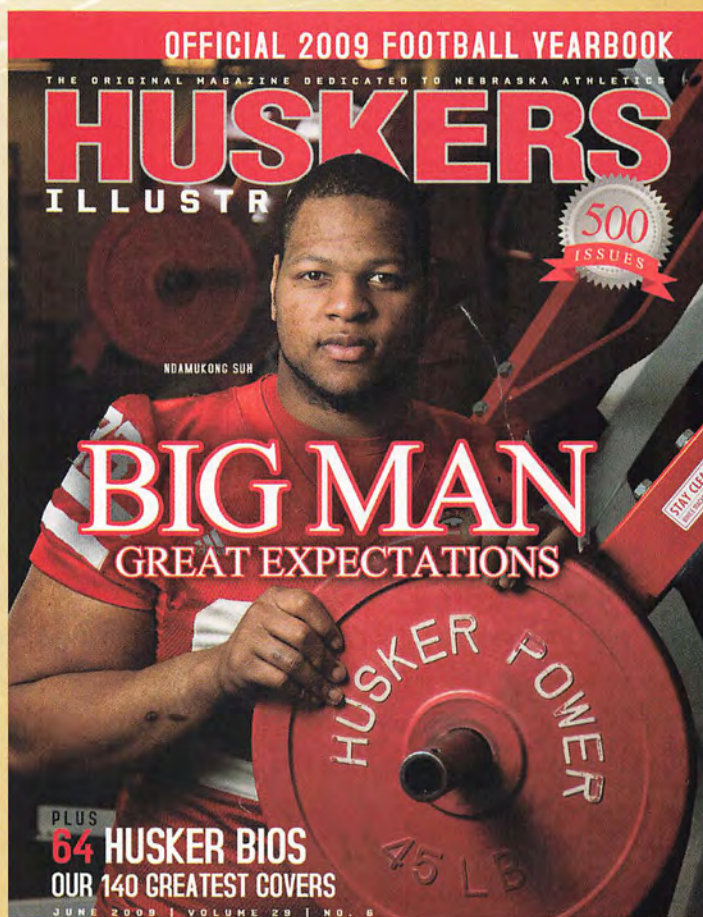


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## READING THE FIELD

BY JOE GANZ

# Coaching opportunity is an exciting one

**WHEN IT COMES** to thinking about starting my coaching career as a graduate assistant at Nebraska, I get extremely excited. The truth is, I can't wait.

As a former player, you always go and watch the games and you think to yourself, "What play would I call here?" or "What defense would I run in this situation?" Now, I'm really looking forward getting into the same frame of mind with Coach Watson and all the offensive coaches and bouncing ideas off of them.

Mainly, I just want to soak up as much knowledge from all these coaches as I can to help make me a better coach in the future. You look at some of the other former college quarterbacks like Major Applewhite and Josh Heupel and how successful they've been in coaching and I'd like to see myself in that same role.

We actually first started talking about me being a grad assistant when I was playing at Nebraska, but I wanted to try and play for as long as I could. Once I kind of figured out that nothing was going to happen for me with the NFL, I went in and visited with Coach Watson and Coach Bo and we talked about it and it was nice to know that when I was finished trying to play pro football, I had a home.

To be honest, it feels kind of nice to be wanted. After not being recruited that much in high school and not getting a lot of looks

in the NFL, it's kind of nice to know that they'd like to have me as a coach. Hopefully, they respect what I did as a player and my intelligence as a player and hopefully that's what I can bring to the staff.

I would love to stay at Nebraska for the rest of my life, if that opportunity presents itself. My goal, obviously, is to become a full-time assistant coach, then a coordinator and hopefully someday be a head coach.

The situation at Nebraska really kind of fits me well because I think Coach Bo, Coach Watson and I are all cut from the same cloth. We all get along, we all respect each other and we all have similar personalities in that we're all very competitive.

As far as my coaching style, I think I'll probably pull a little bit from every coach I've had -- Coach Callahan, Coach Norvell and a lot from Coach Watson and Coach Bo. Those guys have all been influences on me, but I think I'll pull a lot from Coach Watson's personality and the things that he has taught me. I'll still be my own coach, but Wats has had such a big influence on me that it's kind of difficult not to want to emulate what he's done and the way he teaches quarterbacks to play the game of football.

I also really learned a lot last year from Coach Bo. I think we're alike in a lot of

ways in that we're both super competitive and we're both kind of hot-headed, so the two of us together just kind of works.

We'll have to wait and see exactly how they want to use me, but I'd really like to work with quarterbacks because I think that's really where my expertise is right now. I've gone through about everything that you can go through at the position, so I'd love an opportunity to be there for those guys, try to help them and try to be kind of a calming influence for them on the sidelines if they get rattled. I know what they're going through and I've seen what they're seeing on the field.

One of the things that I think I'll really like about coaching is that I've always had an interest in breaking teams down, dissecting defenses and finding plays that will work and drawing up new plays that I think might work. Over the course of my college playing career, I kind of grew fond of that part of the game, plus I really like building relationships with people and the camaraderie that football brings.

It's kind of up in the air right now, but I'd like to join the coaching staff prior to the bowl game so I can be a part of the bowl preparation and see how the staff prepares a game plan over the course of two or three weeks. We'll just have to wait and see -- all I know is that I can't wait to get started. **N**



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## FIRTH, NE



**JON DAMKROGER** is from small-town Nebraska, no question about that. "There's not much to it, gas station, co-op, a few houses and that's about it," he said of Firth.

But no one on the football team gives him a hard time about his background.

"I don't get that very much because there are just so many guys on the team that are from small towns, too," said the walk-on punter and place-kicker. "You kind of get used to it."

Damkroger was a three-sport athlete at Norris High School, earning first-team all-state recognition in football. He played wide receiver and safety, and punted – averaging 43 yards as a senior.

Punting "was kind of the backseat of everything I did," Damkroger said.

"Usually in high school at the Class B level, they just pick one of the better athletes and have them kick. And it was just one of those things where they had me try it."

He was successful enough that Nebraska-Omaha offered him a scholarship. He punted for the Mavericks as a freshman, the only true freshman to play for them in 2007. UNO won its first 10 games and reached the second round of the NCAA Division II playoffs.

"I couldn't ask for anything more there," said Damkroger. "I just wanted to try new things. It's always been a dream of mine to play here. I didn't want to ever look back and say, 'What if?'"

So he notified UNO coach **PAT BEHRNS** of his intentions and contacted **JEFF JAMROG**, Nebraska's associate athletic director for football. Jamrog asked for video of Damkroger. He and kicking coach **JOHN PAPUCHIS** watched the video and invited Damkroger to walk on.

Even though he has yet to play, Damkroger doesn't regret his decision.

Giving up a scholarship, "you would think you would," he said. "I loved it ever since I've been here. The facilities and the people, everything has been great."

### FIRTH, NE

**County:** Lancaster

**Population:** 691

**Distance from Lincoln:** 20 miles

### DID YOU KNOW?

► Firth consolidated with other communities to form the Norris School District in 1964. "There are a lot of towns that make up Norris (High School)," said Damkroger. "I've got friends in pretty much every town."

► Damkroger's family lives 2 miles outside of Firth, about a 10- to 15-minute drive from Norris High. So, as is the case in rural areas, he had a permit to drive to and from school when he was 14-years-old. "It was extra cool for me because I was young for my grade anyway," he said. "I don't know; I feel like I've been behind on everything else ever since."

► Firth is named for Frank Firth, superintendent of the Atchison & Nebraska Railroad. Firth has streets named Russell and Abraham, the maiden name of Firth's mother and the first name of his father, respectively.

► Frank Firth died at age 25, as a result of a railroad accident.

## SIDELINES



### LIKE COACH, LIKE PLAYER

There's a difference between being hurt and being injured.

You can play hurt. As Nebraska's defensive backs have shown this season.

"It's what we've seen all year in practice, I mean, guys being dinged," secondary coach

**MARVIN SANDERS** said. "You see **ALFONZO (DENNARD)**

[pictured] hurt, **LARRY (ASANTE)** coming back from a high-ankle sprain in a week to be on the field. That's the kind of mentality they've had all year."

As a result, Sanders wasn't surprised at the way they held up against Oklahoma, which had 87 offensive snaps. "It was kind of expected that they would grit their teeth and get through it," said Sanders. "They've taken on the personality of that head coach (**BO PELINI**).

"I guarantee you, if he was playing, it would take a horse to drag him off. And I think they've developed that personality a little bit."





## STATE OF THE HUSKERS

BY CURT MCKEEVER

# Undefeated teams not perfect in Big 12 title game

**THE ODDS THAT** Nebraska knocks off Texas in the Big 12 football championship game could be better, but at least they're not astronomical. The 13-year history of the game shows that on five occasions the lower-ranked team found a way to win.

Of course, Husker fans know the first time that happened came in the inaugural contest in 1996, when Texas stunned Nebraska. That outcome still is the only one in which an unranked team won the crown.

Other upsets in the Big 12 game came in 1998 when Texas A&M gave Kansas State its first loss, in 2001 when Colorado avenged a 41-7 regular-season loss to Texas, in 2003 when a three-loss Kansas State squad knocked Oklahoma from the unbeaten ranks, and in 2007 when the Sooners derailed top-ranked Missouri.

Now that you've got some historical reasons to hope for the best for Bo Pelini's bunch, you should know that what they're about to face is jaw-dropping stuff.

Before its regular-season finale, Texas ranked among the top 15 in 12 of the 17 team statistical categories kept by the NCAA.

►Senior quarterback Colt McCoy, a candidate for numerous individual awards, was on a five-game stretch of having completed 130-of-169 passes (76.9 percent) for 1,487 yards, with 14 touchdowns and two interceptions. McCoy, the first Big 12 player to throw 20 TDs in four different seasons, also notched his 43rd win as a starter, the most by a major college quarterback.

►McCoy's favorite target, Jordan

Shipley, had become a finalist for the Biletnikoff Award after setting a single-season record for receiving yards.

►Sophomore safety Earl Thomas, having tied the single-season record for interceptions, was named a finalist for the Thorpe Award.

"They don't have any weaknesses," Kansas coach Mark Mangino proclaimed after the Longhorns beat his club 51-20 to clinch the South Division.

For the moment, Texas coach Mack Brown seemed to be in agreement.

"Since halftime of (Oklahoma), we've been really good...(but) we haven't played our best game yet," he said.

Uh-oh. And to think, his team was leading the nation with an average winning margin of 29.3 points.

Throw in the fact that the last five South representatives have gone on to win the Big 12 game, and things don't appear so good for Nebraska.

But to look solely at that would not be giving this Husker team enough credit.

While it's true that the South has more quality and depth than the North, as has been the case for years, NU did go 2-1 in cross-divisional games this season.

Entering their game at Colorado, the Huskers also had won four straight conference games in a season for the first time since 2001.

Though they can't match Texas' presence in all the NCAA team stats, their No. 3 ranking in scoring defense and No. 8 standing in pass efficiency defense would suggest that they have a decent chance of turning the Big 12 championship into a

low-scoring affair.

"One of the best defenses in the country right now," Kansas State coach Bill Snyder said before his club faced Nebraska.

In defeating the Wildcats 17-3 to clinch the North, the Huskers allowed only 12 pass completions in 32 attempts. It was the eighth game in which their opponent finished under 50 percent.

The Huskers "don't have a position on the field that you could consider a weak point. Their secondary is equally effective against the pass as it is against the run," said Snyder. "They are very balanced in terms of their effectiveness."

So maybe Nebraska needn't be in awe of its next opponent?

Besides, no matter how stylish these Longhorns have been while winning with similar flair as the 2005 national champions, if there's one thing Pelini has seemed to master in two seasons, it's the art of producing strong late-season runs.

The win against Kansas State made NU 8-1 under Pelini in games played in November or later. And though two of the three this season required the Huskers to come from behind, and the other demanded 60 minutes of defensive excellence, it's like they play better in those circumstances.

There's something to chew on if you find yourself watching a tight Big 12 championship.

Considering Texas scored fewer than 34 points only once in its first 11 games, that may be a big 'if,' too.

Ah, but didn't Nebraska give up more than 17 only once in its first 11? **N**





# Austin Cassidy

**6-1, 210, Sophomore, Safety, Lincoln, Neb.**

**HI: Your father, Tim Cassidy, used to work at Nebraska and is now working at Texas A&M. How is he doing, and how often do you get to visit with him?**

**CASSIDY:** I talk to him multiple times during the week, just over the phone and stuff, and he'll e-mail me every now and then. He's doing good. They're doing really well. I'm sure they wish their record was a little better. College Station really became home to them when he was there before, so they're happy to be there. I know my mom loves teaching there, so they're happy where they're at.

**HI: It's funny that a family with Texas A&M ties names their kid Austin. What's the story there?**

**CASSIDY:** I was actually born in Gainesville, Fla., when my dad was working at Florida. He had been at A&M, and my oldest brother was born, and then he went to Gainesville. It was between (Austin) and Preston, and one of my parents really didn't like Preston, so they just went with Austin. They had no idea they were ever going to go back to College Station, and that ended up being where I grew up.

**HI: Did you ever consider transferring to Texas A&M when your dad moved, and why did you decide to stay here?**

**CASSIDY:** He really wanted me to consider (transferring), and I know my mom, she either didn't want to go or she wanted me to come with them. I thought about it a little bit, but the guys on the team here at that point had become like my family, so it didn't make sense to leave all those guys. And my girlfriend was here and we started dating early in high school.

**HI: You were a pretty accomplished track athlete in high school at Lincoln Southwest. Did you ever consider doing track at Nebraska, or were there ever any discussions with Nebraska about doing that?**

**CASSIDY:** I actually had a talk with some of the Nebraska track coaches. I considered it, but I knew I wanted to play football and I didn't think I would be able to do both, just because of the fact that if I was going to play football I knew I would have to get a lot bigger than I was in high school, and I wouldn't be able to do the same kind of events.

**HI: What's your favorite part of game day?**

**CASSIDY:** I'm sure most people would say the Tunnel Walk or something like that but I'd just say the overall atmosphere.

**HI: If you were the mayor of Lincoln for one day, what would be your first act in office?**

**CASSIDY:** I don't know if I would have this power, but I would make it so that LPS and UNL have the same spring break. That always bothered me when my parents were here because they always had a different spring break than I had.

**HI: What's your earliest memory of Memorial Stadium?**

**CASSIDY:** I do remember my first game. It was Western Illinois in Coach Callahan's first year. I remember I was on the sideline with a sideline pass from my dad and just looking around. At that point I wasn't in love with Lincoln yet.

**HI: What are your plans after college?**

**CASSIDY:** I haven't really thought about it too much. My major is psychology but I'm not really sure what I want to do with that. I've been thinking about going to law school. My girlfriend is going to go to law school and she and my parents have been nudging me toward doing that a little bit.

**HI: Who's the hardest hitter on the team?**

**CASSIDY:** There are some guys on offense who will come at you pretty hard but I've always said that if there's one person I'm glad I'm not on offense for, it's Suh. I'm sure you've seen his hits this year. I'm glad I don't ever have to run into him. I'm glad he's on my side.

**HI: If you weren't playing football, how would you spend your Saturdays in the fall?**

**CASSIDY:** Probably just relaxing, just spending time with my girlfriend and her family. Since my parents moved they're like another family.





# Woody Cox

## Still Going Full-Speed Ahead

**ALMOST ALL OF** Tom Osborne's football recruits say they never could keep up with their former coach's relentless pace, a work rate that he still maintains as Nebraska's athletic director.

There may be one exception in Bellevue, Wash. At age 58, Woody Cox, a starting split end whom Osborne recruited and then coached for Nebraska's back-to-back national championship teams in 1970-71, is a bundle of energy who's still going full-speed ahead – and like Osborne, shows no signs of slowing down.

Still at his 178-pound football playing weight, the 5-foot-9 Cox continues to build on a competitive resume that would make your head spin. He also has one of the most unique jobs anywhere as senior vice president of operations, overseeing a staff of 850 at the largest, single-location health club in the world.

It's called The PRO Sports Club, and it's a doozy with 48,000 mostly corporate members and 300,000 square feet of program space. Located across the street from Microsoft Corporation headquarters, the facility has five swimming pools, four full-sized NBA basketball courts, squash/racquetball and tennis courts, a full salon like you'd find at a five-star resort hotel, three restaurants, a grocery store, auto

detailing, dry cleaning, five doctors on staff, 13 psychologists, 12 registered dietitians, 24 physical therapists and 112 personal trainers who have degrees in exercise science and national certifications from the American College of Sports Medicine.

No wonder Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer spends three to five days a week in the facility. So do execs and employees from Nintendo, Google and Honeywell. "It's a corporate perk and the reason why we're so huge. We're also deluxe, deluxe, deluxe," says Cox, who is busy, busy, busy, even when he's not ordering 183 of the Rolls Royce of treadmills and 72 new elliptical trainers at the same time.

"All of our staff members are trained by the same people who train Disney and Ritz Carlton," Cox said, "so everyone who comes into this place walks away shaking their heads, thinking how amazing it is and what an experience it was."

Cox could say the same thing about life after his Nebraska football career. In addition to rising in the health club ranks, he teamed up with Ted Turner on Captain Outrageous in the yachting world, competed in 12 Honolulu Marathons and completed more than 60



### WOODY COX

**LETTERS:** 1970-71

**POSITION:** Split End

**CURRENT:** Senior Vice President, PRO Sports Club

**RESIDENCE:** Bellevue, Washington

triathlons before discovering what really cranks him up ... cycling.

"It's one of the few sports that can serve as both a training tool and a leisure activity," said Cox, who uses cycling as the cornerstone of his fitness program and to feed his competitive passion.

At age 46, Cox set a world record in the 3,000-meter time trial, and he hasn't stopped racing since. He has 36 U.S. national championships and 16 world titles, achieved mostly in England and throughout Europe.

"At my age, I'm still a Category I cyclist," he said. "I compete with a lot of Olympians and still drive them crazy," he said. "Thanks to smarter training and better nutrition, I'm actually faster and better physically on my bike now than I was 15 years ago."

But, he admits, still crazy after all these years. **N**





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# McCoy leads Texas as all-time winningest QB



BY STEVEN M. SIPPLE

**TEXAS COACH** Mack Brown gathered his team in the locker room following the Longhorns' Nov. 21 triumph over Kansas in Austin, Texas.

Brown awarded Colt McCoy the game ball, which made a lot of sense considering the NCAA record McCoy had just surpassed.

With the 51-20 victory against Kansas, McCoy won his 43rd game to become the winningest starting quarterback in college football history, passing David Greene, who was 42-10 at Georgia from 2001-04.

"Colt McCoy becoming the winningest quarterback in college football is amazing," Brown told reporters after the KU game. "There's only one of those, and he still has some games left."

McCoy's record as starter stood at 43-7 entering Texas' Nov. 26 showdown against rival Texas A&M. He characterized his place in the NCAA record book as "a team record." Longhorns defensive end Sergia Kindle told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram that McCoy is "Superman" before adding, "The guy can't do it by himself. He had a good supporting cast."

Statistics back Kindle's statement.

Entering the Texas A&M contest, Texas ranked first nationally in rushing defense, third in total defense and seventh in scoring defense.

Meanwhile, McCoy spearheads an offense that scores over 40 points a game. He led Texas to its first Big 12 championship game appearance since 2005.

"That's one of our goals," McCoy said.



COLT MCCOY

"We won the South."

McCoy arrived on the Texas campus as a lightly-recruited player from Tuscola, Texas, a town of 700 residents. Few people expected McCoy to rise to the heights he's achieved as a Longhorn.

"I had people in my town, friends of mine, people that were real close to me, saying that I'd never be able to play here," McCoy told The Star-Telegram. "I definitely used that as motivation, used that as something in the back of my mind to push me whenever I wanted to give up."

## LONGHORN NOTES

► Texas needs to clean up at least a couple special-teams areas – kickoff return coverage and punting. The Longhorns dropped to No. 54 nationally in kickoff return yardage allowed after giving up a 98-yard touchdown return to Kansas' Dezmon Briscoe in the fourth quarter. In the first half, KU's Darrel Stuckey raced 42 yards with a kickoff.

► UT came out of the Kansas game ranked 99th nationally in net punting at 33.48 yards.

► Texas' 21 seniors all are on track to earn their degrees within the next year, and five already have earned their undergraduate degrees.

### TEXAS QUICK FACTS

**Head coach:** Mack Brown, 126-26 in 12 seasons, 212-100-1 in 25 seasons  
**Series:** Texas leads, 8-4-0  
**at Lincoln:** Texas leads, 4-1-0  
**at Austin:** Texas leads, 3-1-0  
**at Neutral Sites:** Nebraska leads 2-1-0  
**Note:** This year's championship game marks a rematch of the 1996 and 1999 Big 12 title games. Texas won the first game, 37-27, and Nebraska won the second, 22-6.

### 2009 SCHEDULE

9/5 La.-Monroe, W 59-20  
 9/12 at Wyoming, W 41-10  
 9/19 Texas Tech, W 34-24  
 9/26 Texas-El Paso, W 64-7  
 10/10 Colorado, W 38-14  
 10/17 Oklahoma, W 16-13  
 10/24 at Missouri, W 41-7  
 10/31 at OK State, W 41-14  
 11/7 UCF, W 35-3  
 11/14 at Baylor, W 47-14  
 11/21 Kansas, W 51-20  
 11/26 at Texas A&M, 7:00pm  
 12/5 vs. Nebraska 7:00pm



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# Fresh Rex

**A**fter gaining just 135 total yards through three-plus quarters, Nebraska's offensive unit came through when it mattered most in the Cornhuskers' 28-20 victory at Colorado.

Leading 21-14, Nebraska took possession with 13:35 remaining and powered its way to a 13-play, 80-yard touchdown drive that consumed 6:52 and put the Huskers ahead 28-14 on backup I-back Rex Burkhead's 7-yard scoring run to go ahead 28-14 with 6:43 to play.

"That was a huge drive for us," Nebraska coach Bo Pelini said. "Our kids, they really got after it – I thought we played good, physical football.

"I thought that was a statement drive for us and that won us a football game."

Burkhead, who was back for just the second game since breaking a bone in his foot, rushed nine times for 55 yards during the critical scoring march. He finished with career-best 100 yards on a career-high 18 carries, while spelling starter Roy Helu Jr.

"Rex has got fresh legs and he's giving us a lot more thump," Nebraska offensive coordinator Shawn Watson said. "He's such an explosive runner, he finds holes and finds seams. That's what we've got to be able to do to win right now – we've got to be able to rush the



PHOTO BY AARON BABCOCK

football – so he was really important to us today."

While Nebraska's drive also included a key pass completion from Zac Lee to Niles Paul for 10 yards on a third-and-5 play, Burkhead did most of the work. Watson called the true freshman's number on four consecutive plays twice.

"It's a confidence-booster that they have the confidence in you to make plays out there and kept the drive going," Burkhead said.

While acknowledging that Burkhead

brings "fresh legs" to Nebraska's lineup, center Jacob Hickman suggested it's another part of Texas native's anatomy that matters most.

"When you see him get the 5 extra yards like that, you know the fresh legs are helping, but that's just a lot of heart," Hickman said. "You can have all the fresh legs in the world and you can go down, but the kid's got nothing but heart and he just fights for every yard." **N**

— by Terry Douglass





PHOTO BY SCOTT BRUHN

## DISPLEASED PELINI

Despite a 28-20 victory at Colorado that sends Nebraska into the Big 12 Conference championship game riding a five-game winning streak, Cornhuskers' head coach **BO PELINI** didn't appear overly impressed.

"It's a win – that's great," Pelini said. "I'll take the wins anytime we can get it, but I know we're capable of playing a lot better."

Special teams, led by **NILES PAUL'S** 59-yard punt return for a touchdown and another stellar punting day by **ALEX HENERY**, was the only phase of the game Pelini seemed remotely satisfied with. Nebraska finished with just 217 yards of total offense and allowed the Buffaloes 403, including a 56-yard TD pass from **TYLER HANSEN** to **SCOTTY MCKNIGHT** on the game's final play.

Pelini said his team's preparation on a short week wasn't a factor.

"I thought the focus was fine," he said.

"It's about execution. We didn't execute. You guys saw it – that was not our best football. There's a lot more out there for us, for this football team to do together.

"I'm happy we won the football game, but I thought we took a step back today."

### SCARY SITUATION

Nebraska quarterback **ZAC LEE** had a brief scare early in the second half when he went down with an ankle injury before limping off the field with the assistance of the training staff. Backup quarterback **CODY GREEN** finished the drive, but Lee returned on the Huskers' next possession and completed the game.

"I just got rolled up on – it happens," said Lee, who finished 9-of-14 passing for 73 yards and a TD and insisted he'll be ready for Saturday's Big 12 title game against Texas. "What are you going to do? It's

football. I'll be good to go."

Nebraska offensive coordinator **SHAWN WATSON** said he isn't concerned with Lee's health.

"It was nothing that was a serious injury of any kind," Watson said. "He's OK. He was able to finish the game and he was running around and hopping around in the locker room ... he's healthy."

### OH HENERY!

After a stellar punting performance against Kansas State, Nebraska's **ALEX HENERY** topped himself against Colorado, punting six times for a career-best 50.7-yard average, including punts of 58 and 63 yards.

Already leading the Big 12 in pinning opponents inside their own 20-yard line, Henery downed four punts inside the Colorado 20, increasing his league-leading total to 26. He had a first-quarter punt





PHOTO BY AARON BABCOCK

downed at the Buffaloes' 2, marking his eighth punt of the year that has pinned the opponent inside their own 3-yard line.

"I was pretty happy," Henery said. "I felt like I was hitting the ball really well today."

## READY FOR TEXAS?

While Nebraska will be a decided underdog in the Big 12 title game against 12-0 Texas, linebacker **PHILLIP DILLARD** said he likes the Huskers' chances of competing with the Longhorns at Dallas Cowboys Stadium in Irving, Texas.

"I think we're ready," Dillard said. "We're just going to have to go in, start from the beginning again. We have a good long week ahead of us and we're going to have to go in there and get on the field early."

"We're going to have to bring it to them. We're going to have to bring it a step higher than this."

While Nebraska head coach **BO PELINI** had spent the week imploring his players not to look past Colorado to playing Texas, Dillard admitted that he watched the telecast of the Longhorns' game against Texas A&M – a 49-39 UT victory – in his hotel

room Thursday night. He said it's obvious what it will take to keep pace with the South Division champions.

"We're going to have to come in with high intensity," Dillard said. "We can't make mistakes or have foolish penalties."

## PAYDIRT FOR PAUL

**NILES PAUL** gave Nebraska an early spark against Colorado, returning a punt 59 yards for a TD and giving the Huskers a 7-0 lead with 3:34 left in the first quarter.

"Great effort by him," Nebraska coach **BO PELINI** said of Paul's return. "That was just an individual guy making a play. We were in punt-safe (mode) – that was just a guy making a play."

Paul said he was pleased just to give the Huskers a little jump start.

"It felt good because it was the first quarter of the game and it helped get our offense rolling a little after that," Paul said. "It got the momentum on our side."

The punt return was the longest of Paul's career his first punt return for a TD. The junior's previous long return was 55 yards at Virginia Tech this season.

# QUICKLY

## O'HANLON'S PICK-SIX

Nebraska's defense accounted for its third score as senior safety **MATT O'HANLON** intercepted a **TYLER HANSEN** and returned it 20 yards for a TD, putting the Huskers ahead 21-7 with 3:16 remaining before halftime.

O'Hanlon received several key blocks, including a crushing blow by senior defensive tackle **NDAMUKONG SUH**.

"It felt great," said O'Hanlon, who has a team-high five interceptions. "I had a lot of guys through me some good blocks in there – I think Suh about killed someone – but they really helped me out, getting into the end zone."

O'Hanlon said his pick-six came with Nebraska employing its new "Diesel" defensive package, which included five defensive linemen.

"I just came down and played the back and he threw it right into my hands," O'Hanlon said. "I thought I saw (Hansen) looking right at me, but I guess he didn't even see me, so I was kind of in the right place at the right time."

## WORTH NOTING

► With the victory, Nebraska improved to 9-3 on the season, giving the Huskers back-to-back nine-win seasons for the first time since their NCAA-record streak of 33 consecutive nine-win seasons was snapped after the 2001 campaign. NU clinched its first nine-win regular season since 2006.





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REX BURKHEAD DRAGS A PILE OF COLORADO DEFENDERS IN THE FOURTH QUARTER. PHOTO BY AARON BABCOCK

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## FAN OF THE GAME



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**TOP LEFT:** Austin Cassidy delivers a hit. [PHOTO BY SCOTT BRUHN] **ABOVE:** Riley Johnson, 16, of Salida, Colo., drove nearly 200 miles to support the Huskers. [PHOTO BY AARON BABCOCK] **BELOW:** Rex Burkhead scores with 6:43 remaining in the game to give Nebraska a 28-14 lead. [BABCOCK] **LEFT:** Prince Amukamara returns an interception.





# REPORT CARD

## RUSHING:

Nebraska's running game was average at best, overall. But freshman **REX BURKHEAD** would have earned an A individually. "He ran hard," coach **BO PELINI** said. "That's just who he is. I'm proud of him." Just one week after returning from a broken foot, Burkhead rushed for 100 yards on 18 carries. He didn't lose a yard. And he kept the pile moving more than once.

## PASSING:

**ZAC LEE** completed 9-of-14 passes. He didn't throw an interception. And redshirted freshman tight end **BEN COTTON** made an outstanding catch for the Cornhuskers' second touchdown. But Lee was under constant pressure, and he was sacked three times.

## RUSHING DEFENSE:

**RODNEY STEWART**, Colorado's 5-foot-6, 175-pound tailback rushed for 110 yards (the most by an individual against Nebraska this season) on 21 carries, and was never tackled for a loss. "You've got to execute. You've got to tackle well. And we didn't do that today," said Pelini.

## PASSING DEFENSE:

Yes, Colorado quarterback **TYLER HANSEN** passed for three touchdowns, including a 56-yarder on the final play of the game. But Nebraska intercepted three of his passes, too, and **MATT O'HANLON** returned one 20 yards for a touchdown. So that pushes the grade up. But the fact the Cornhuskers allowed more than 400 total yards for the first time this season can't be ignored in the grading.

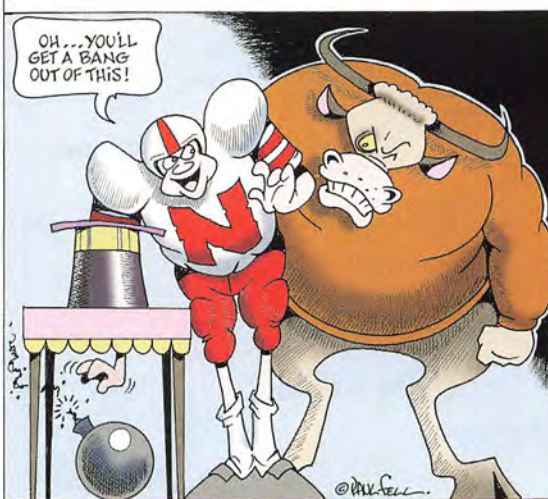
## KICKING/SPECIAL TEAMS:

**NILES PAUL'S** 59-yard punt return for a touchdown opened the scoring, and **ALEX HENERY** averaged 50.7 yards on six punts, four of which were downed inside the 20-yard line. "We played well on special teams, and that's about it," Pelini said.



Ndamukong Suh earns a sack of Tyler Hansen after forcing an intentional grounding. [PHOTO BY AARON BABCOCK]

## NEBRASKA vs. TEXAS



DECEMBER 5, 2009  
HUSKERS WILL NEED TO HAVE A FEW TRICKS UP THEIR SLEEVES TO PULL OUT A WIN AGAINST THE #3 RANKED LONGHORNS!

## QUICK PICKS



**Aaron Babcock**  
(66-28/7-1)



**Mike Babcock**  
(67-27/6-2)



**Sean Callahan**  
(63-31/6-2)



**John Talman**  
(62-32/6-2)



**Matt Davison**  
(67-27/4-4)

	(Season/Last Week)				
Texas vs. Nebraska	UT 24-10	UT 24-13	UT 27-17	UT 24-21	NU 20-16
Oregon State at Oregon	OU 35-30	OU 42-38	OU 45-41	OU 38-36	OU 38-27
Arizona at USC	USC 24-22	USC 31-28	USC 23-17	USC 31-27	USC 27-21
Ohio vs. Central Michigan	CM 38-20	CMU 28-17	OHIO 34-31	OHIO 35-30	CMU 34-24
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh	CIN 33-23	PITT 28-24	CIN 27-21	CIN 41-28	CIN 34-24
Florida at Alabama	UF 17-16	UA 17-15	UF 23-21	UF 30-20	UA 21-17
Georgia Tech vs. Clemson	GT 30-17	GT 31-28	CLEM 38-31	GT 28-16	GT 34-21
Cal at Washington	UW 28-27	CAL 45-14	CAL 40-31	CAL 42-21	CAL 37-27



# GameStats

## SUMMARY

### SCORING

Nov. 27, 2009  
Folsom Field • Boulder, Co.  
Attendance: 52,817

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Tot
Nebraska	7	14	0	7	28
Colorado	0	7	7	6	20

	NU	CU
<b>First Quarter</b>		
NU Paul 59-yard Punt Return (Henery Kick) 03:34	7	0
<b>Second Quarter</b>		
NU Cotton Pass from Lee 24-yards (Henery Kick) 14:53 Drive: 6 plays 56 yds 3:06	14	0
CU Behrens Pass from Hansen 2-yards (Goodman Kick) 05:39 Drive: 7 plays 67 yds 3:15	14	7
NU O'Hanlon TD INT (Henery Kick) 03:16	21	7
<b>Third Quarter</b>		
CU McKnight Pass from Hansen 6-yards (Goodman Kick) 06:50 Drive: 12 plays 59 yds 4:49	21	14
<b>Fourth Quarter</b>		
NU Burkhead 7-yard Run (Henery Kick) 06:43 Drive: 13 plays 80 yds 6:52	28	14
CU McKnight Pass from Hansen 56-yards (No PAT) 00:00 Drive: 8 plays 80 yds 1:30	28	20

### TEAM STATS

	NU	CU
<b>Total First Downs</b>	14	20
Rushing	9	8
Passing	5	9
Penalty	0	3
<b>Rushing Attempts</b>	40	28
<b>Yards Gained Rushing</b>	163	151
<b>Yards Lost Rushing</b>	19	17
<b>Net Yards Rushing</b>	144	134
<b>Net Yards Passing</b>	73	269
Passes Attempted	14	44
Passes Completed	9	21
Had Intercepted	0	3
Percent Completion	64.3%	47.7%
Yards per Attempt	5.2	6.1
Yards per Completion	8.1	12.8
<b>Total Offensive Plays</b>	54	72
<b>Total Net Yards</b>	217	403
Avg. Gain Per Play	4.0	5.6
<b>Fumbles: No-Lost</b>	2-1	2-0
<b>Penalties: No-Yards</b>	7-49	7-34
<b>Punts: No-Yards</b>	6-304	5-213
Avg. Per Punt	50.7	42.6
Avg. Net Punt	47.3	28.4
<b>Punt Returns: No-Yards</b>	4-71	3-20
<b>Kickoff Returns: No-Yards</b>	1-21	3-49
<b>Interception Returns: No-Yards</b>	3-65	0-0
<b>Fumble Returns: No-Yards</b>	0-0	0-0
<b>Miscellaneous Yards</b>	0	0
<b>Possession Time</b>	31:10	28:50
<b>Third-Down Conversions</b>	3-10	7-16
Percentage	30.0%	43.8%
<b>Fourth-Down Conversions</b>	0-0	0-1
Percentage	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Sacks By: No-Yards</b>	1-17	3-15

## INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

### NEBRASKA

Rushing	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Burkhead	18	100	0	100	5.6	1	15
Helu Jr.	14	58	4	54	3.9	0	9
Green	2	4	0	4	2.0	0	3
Lee	6	1	15	-14	-2.3	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>

Passing	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Lee	14	9	64.3	0	73	1	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>64.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>

Receiving	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Cotton	3	33	1	24
Paul	2	20	0	10
Kinnie	1	8	0	8
Young	1	7	0	7
McNeill	1	3	0	3
Reed	1	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>

Punt Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Paul	4	71	1	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>59</b>

Kick Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Paul	1	21	0	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>

Punting	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In 20
Henery	6	50.7	63	0	1	0	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>50.7</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

Field Goals	Made	Att	Lg	Blkd
Henery	0	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Defense	Tac	Ast	Tot	TFL	Sac	PD	FF	FR
Dillard	4	4	8	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Asante	5	1	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Compton	4	1	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Suh	5	0	5	1-17	1-17	0	0	0
Allen	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Amukamara	4	0	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
O'Hanlon	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Dennard	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Turner	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Crick	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Gomes	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Hagg	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Meredith	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Blatchford	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Blue	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Cassidy	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Fisher	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Martin	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Smith	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Stoddard	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Washington	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Steinkuler	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	1	0	0

Interception Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Amukamara	1	40	0	40
O'Hanlon	1	20	1	20
Gomes	1	5	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>40</b>

### COLORADO

Rushing	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Stewart	21	110	0	110	5.2	0	28
Lockridge	2	20	0	20	10.0	0	13
Hansen	5	21	17	4	0.8	0	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>

Passing	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Hansen	44	21	47.7	3	269	3	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>47.7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>58</b>

Receiving	No	Yds	TD	Lg
McKnight	7	114	2	56
Simas	6	108	0	58
Deehan	2	14	0	8
Devenny	2	13	0	8
Sumler	2	12	0	9
Stewart	1	6	0	6
Behrens	1	2	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>58</b>

Punt Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
McKnight	2	17	0	13
Espinoza	1	3	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>

Kick Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Lockridge	3	49	0	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>

Punting	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In 20
DiLallo	5	42.6	52	0	0	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>42.6</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

Field Goals	Made	Att	Lg	Blkd
Goodman	0	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Defense	Tac	Ast	Tot	TFL	Sac	PD	FF	FR
Brown	10	1	11	2-8	1-4	0	0	0
Burney	6	3	9	1-5	1-5	0	0	0
Perkins	6	1	7	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Beatty	4	2	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Pericak	4	2	6	0-0	0-0	1	1	0
Smart	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Bonsu	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Brown	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Goree	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	1
Sipili	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Burton	2	0	2	1-6	1-6	0	0	0
Polk	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Smith	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Stengel	0	2	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Deehan	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Herrod	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Ilitis	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Jaffee	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Mohler	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Moyd	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Sandersfeld	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
West	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0

Interception Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

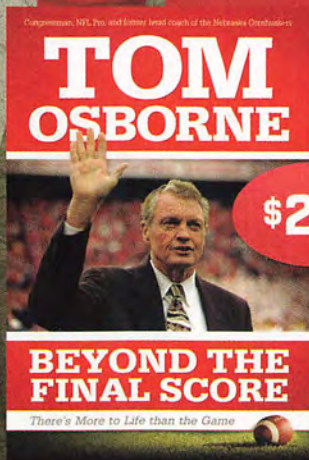


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# Picture Perfect

by Mike Babcock

The photo wasn't meant to mirror the classic portrait "American Gothic," you know, the one featuring a farmer and his wife, the farmer holding a pitchfork.

It was just something Marvin Sanders wanted to take home to Markham, Ill., a snapshot to show family and friends, his personal picture postcard, greetings from

Lincoln, Neb.

Sanders was a high school senior, on his official football recruiting visit. His recruiting host was Willie Griffin, "Big Chill," a Cornhusker freshman from Monrovia, Calif. Griffin drove Sanders out Ninth Street, south, across Highway 2 and Old Cheney, to a dirt road where the photo was taken.





Sanders' visit was in December of 1984. Lincoln's population has more than doubled since then. The area has been developed over the past 25 years, and the silos or grain bins are long gone. Being from suburban Chicago, the "hood," Sanders didn't know what to call the structures, or what their function was, exactly. But they were the perfect background for his purposes.

So the photo was taken, of him with those buildings behind.

When he got home, and the film had been developed, he showed the picture to his buddies. Their response was: "Oh, man, you can't go there. You're going to Nebraska instead of Miami?"

"They were in shock on that one," Sanders recalled.

Miami was among the other schools recruiting him, along with Colorado. But Nebraska had the inside track, in large part because of then-coach Tom Osborne. After Osborne had come to Chicago for a home visit, and had "sat on my plastic couch, I knew then it was the right place," said Sanders.

More accurately, perhaps, Sanders' father, Eugene, knew it was the right place.

"My dad didn't care about football but whether or not he (Osborne) would get his son graduated," Sanders said. "I was the first one to go to college, and I'm the youngest of 11. It meant something to my dad to make sure that his baby boy got his degree. So my dad signed off on it."

To understand that, as well as why he felt compelled to take the photo with the silos in the background, is to understand why Sanders' return to Nebraska to coach is special.

He realized on his recruiting visit, Sanders said after a recent practice, that "if you had any place where you wanted to raise your kids, Lincoln was probably a good place to do that."

Sanders is proof you can go "home" again because he's done it – not once but twice.

He returned to Nebraska in 2003, when Frank Solich restructured the staff following a 7-7 season.







**"I feel an obligation to every young man who has come through this program, to uphold the tradition and what it's been about."**

**MARVIN SANDERS**

Sanders replaced his position coach, George Darlington. The restructure also included the hiring of Bo Pelini, Jimmy Williams, Barney Cotton, Tim Albin and Scott Downing as full-time assistants.

And Sanders returned in 2008, when Pelini brought him back, along with Cotton, Ron Brown, Jeff Jamrog and brother Carl Pelini (a grad assistant in 2003) from Solich's final staff.

The first chance was special, the second even more so. Sanders considers coaching an obligation to those he coaches. And the obligation is enhanced by his having played at Nebraska.

"It has that little, extra umpf, meaning everything I try to coach and be a part of these young men's lives means that much more because I experienced it," Sanders said. "I don't know if you say you coach a little harder, study a little more film, but I feel an obligation to every young man who has come through this program, every coach who's been a part of this program, to uphold the tradition and

what it's been about. Since I understand that, I think I take pride in trying to do that."

Sanders tapped the horseshoe when he left the locker room on his way to the field, and he earned a Blackshirt – he played cornerback and then safety, earning All-Big Eight honorable mention as a senior, despite starting only seven games (and playing in nine) because of a shoulder injury.

He still has his Blackshirt, No. 26, "a little torn and ragged," he said.

And he still remembers the day it was hanging in his locker for the first time.

"It's special to me," Sanders said.

He conveys that special feeling to those he coaches.

"You don't want to let Coach down. You want to go out there and give it all you've got because he was in your shoes . . . when he played here," said senior safety Larry Asante. "He's been through it. So he understands the level





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of play it takes to up-hold the Blackshirt tradition."

Sanders sets an example, preserved on film cut-ups from that time.

"He was banging heads," Asante said. "He was making big hits."

Like fathers telling sons, Sanders also tells those who play for him how much more difficult things were in the old days. "He says he played with separated shoulders, broken collarbones; he says all of that. He's a tough guy," said Asante. "We get a lot of our toughness from him as a coach."

Beyond that, Sanders wants to influence the lives of his players, just as those who coached him influenced his life. For example, his coach high school coach, Robert Jackson, "had a big impact on my life," said Sanders, who coached youth-league sports in Lincoln while playing at Nebraska.

"Without him, I probably would not have made it out of Chicago."

Jackson, who went on to coach at the collegiate level for 22 years, sat him down one day and talked about Nebraska and its tradition, the players the program had produced, and about Osborne.

Sanders had a sense of Nebraska when he took his visit in December of 1984. And so did his dad.

His dad is 83-years-old now and still talks about the time Osborne came to Markham and sat on the couch. "He still asks is 'Doctor' still around there? He calls him (Osborne) 'Doctor.'"

"I say, 'Yeh, he's the athletic director now.'"

And his dad says of Osborne, "Boy, he sure is a good man."

Sanders dad understood what made Nebraska the right place for his son was the people. The photo with the silos in the background didn't put him off. He drove a truck for a living, "so he had been across the country," Sanders said. "He knew about all those things." **N**



## Gabbert rumors put to rest

BY SEAN STEVENS

**R**umors can be a nasty problem in the world of recruiting. Internet message boards can fuel untruths to the point that they're believed to be fact. The rumors surrounding Husker quarterback commit **TYLER GABBERT** of Ballwin, Mo., Parkway West were many and varied. According to some, Gabbert was already decommitted from Nebraska and committed to Missouri but was just waiting until the last minute to sabotage the Huskers' quarterback recruiting.

According to Gabbert, however, it was the rumors about NU offensive coordinator **SHAWN WATSON** that fueled many of his concerns.

"I heard rumors (Watson) may have been leaving and all that stuff," said the 6-foot, 190-pounder after his official visit to Lincoln for the Kansas State game. "Those have been put to rest."

"On the Internet you read so much stuff that's just not true," Gabbert continued. "It's tough to believe anything you read. Coach Watson, he's definitely a big reason why I'm coming to Nebraska. Not just because of his ability as offensive coordinator or coaching the quarterbacks, but him as a person and his family."

Gabbert said that the rumors of him choosing Missouri were unfounded as well.

"I haven't talked to their coaches in a long time," he said. "All along I wasn't wavering as much as people saw or anticipated. This just proved and reassured once again why I want to come in here and wanted to come here in the first place."

Gabbert said that he's solid with Nebraska and excited about his future.

"I think it's just the potential," Gabbert said. "The coaches were talking about it. They were saying we're still a young team and we're back on the rise. Coach



TYLER GABBERT

**(BO) PELINI** always stresses the character of the kids (in the program). So I think the potential is going to be something to look forward to.

"The atmosphere that coach Pelini and his staff are building and all the resources are there from the support staff. I'm coming to Nebraska. That's plain and simple."

### BLOWN AWAY

Three-star defensive back prospect **JONATHAN MACK** has had an offer from Nebraska for a long time. He had originally planned to visit with his Colton, Calif., teammate **DERRICK MALONE** during the Oklahoma game, but circumstances prevented that trip. Mack was in town for the Kansas State victory, though.

"It went well," Mack said. "It was very great. I loved it out here. I like the school in general. Everything was very homey, and everyone was very nice and polite."

Thus far, Mack has 39 total tackles, two interceptions and a fumble recovery from his cornerback spot during Colton's 10-1 season.

The 5-foot-10, 175-pounder also has an offer from Iowa State and is considering a trip to Ames, Iowa, before making his decision. It will take a lot to out-do the

Huskers, though.

"I'm still undecided and want to go home and think about it," he said. "My visit was a '10.' It was pretty great. It was as good as I expected."

### AWAITING OWA

The biggest 'name' official visitor Nebraska has hosted during the 2009 season is probably **OWAMAGBE ODIGHIZUWA**, a 6-foot-3, 234-pound defensive end from Portland, Ore., David Douglas High School. It's not the length of his name, but rather the depth of his game that has Odighizuwa ranked as the No. 20 player at all positions nationally by Rivals.com.

As of this writing, the 5-star prospect was still traveling home from his official visit, however two Nebraska commits who were on hand for the Kansas State game spent time with him and offered their perspectives.

Odighizuwa was seen on the sideline during pre-game warm-ups talking with defensive tackle commit **CHASE ROME** of Columbia, Mo., Rock Bridge. Rome helped dispel some of the misconceptions that recruits have about Lincoln.

"I usually just answer questions you can't ask the coaches," Rome said. "I



talked to Owa a lot. We hung out, and he seems like a really cool kid. If you're not from Nebraska, Lincoln is the opposite of what you'd expect it to be. You think corn, small town, and nothing to do. I was like, I promise you, it's so much fun. Plus, 'We don't have to worry about it anyway since we'll be playing football 24-7.'

"I don't pressure anybody, but I talked to him. He liked it. We talked. He could have just been polite, I don't know. I like Owa. He's well-spoken and obviously talented."

Quarterback commit **TYLER GABBERT** also spent some time with Odighizuwa.

"I hung out with Owa and Chase at the game," Gabbert said. "[Owa] is a real cool guy. He's fun to be around. I think he saw what it's about. The defense put on a show once again last night, and (**NDAMUKONG**) **SUH** is from his area, so I think he's familiar with him. I think he got the picture."

### NEBRASKA'S OFFICIAL VISITS

NAME	POS.	HT	WT	DATE	COMMIT
Lavonte David	LB	6-1	214	11/21	
Tyler Evans	ATH	6-2	180	11/21	Nebraska
Tyler Gabbert	QB	6-0	190	11/21	Nebraska
Jermarcus Hardrick	OL	6-6	320	11/21	LSU
Jonathan Mack	DB	5-10	175	11/21	
Anthony White	DT	6-3	305	11/21	
Owamagbe	DE	6-3	234	11/21	
Odighizuwa					
Corey Cooper	DB	6-2	203	11/6	Illinois
Jay Guy	DT	6-1	300	11/7	Nebraska
Austin Hill	WR	6-3	192	11/7	
Derrick Malone	DB	5-11	165	11/7	
Joshua Mitchell	DB	5-11	165	11/7	Nebraska
Harold Mobley	ATH	6-4	225	11/7	
Tobi Okuyemi	DE	6-3	250	11/7	Nebraska
Tyler Slavin	WR	6-2	182	11/7	
Giovanni Bernard	RB	5-9	198	10/24	Notre Dame
Curtis Carter	ATH	5-10	161	10/17	Nebraska
Quincy Enunwa	WR	6-2	200	10/17	Nebraska
Andre Hal	DB	6-0	170	10/17	Vanderbilt
Derron Smith	DB	5-11	173	10/17	
Ciante Evans	DB	5-11	170	9/26	Nebraska
Chase Harper	TE	6-6	248	9/26	Nebraska
Joshua Reese	WR	6-1	182	9/26	
Chase Rome	DE	6-3	290	9/26	Nebraska
Bud Sasser	WR	6-3	200	9/26	
Bobby Swigert	WR	6-1	175	9/26	Boston College
Colin Tanigawa	OL	6-3	286	9/26	Washington
Willis Wright	WR	6-2	185	9/26	
Harvey Jackson	DB	6-2	185	9/5	Nebraska
Tejay Johnson	ATH	6-2	190	9/5	
Mike Moudy	OL	6-7	291	9/5	Nebraska
Donovan Vestal	DE	6-5	240	9/5	Nebraska



## IN STATE SPOTLIGHT

BY SEAN CALLAHAN

Ewing tight end **AUSTIN KACZOR** is one of the best all around athletes in the state. The 6-foot-4, 215 pound Kaczor had 88 receptions for 1,518 yards 22 touchdowns this past season, and averaged over 28 points a game on the basketball court as a junior. Huskers Illustrated caught up with Kaczor for this week's in-state recruiting spotlight.

**CALLAHAN:** Will it be basketball or football for you at the next level?

**KACZOR:** I'm thinking football right now over basketball. I've kind of always been a basketball guy, but then my junior year I flipped around and I kind of started liking football a little more.

**CALLAHAN:** What's the most dunks you've had in a basketball game before?

**KACZOR:** Six and they were all in the first half in a game against West Boyd.

**CALLAHAN:** This was the last year for Ewing's football program before you guys co-op with O'Neill in 2010. How special was it for you guys to win state in 2008 and make the semifinals this year with only 14 boys in entire school?

**KACZOR:** This town was on fire. We only have 400 people in this town and I bet there were over 400 on our sideline for that last game. Everybody came back. Playing for Ewing and just to say I played the last game for Ewing is special. We've had a lot of people come through this town. People always say we have athletes, and we do, but everybody here works hard. Playing and having Ewing on your chest and having that final game at our home field is something I'll never forget. I already have the game on tape at home and I'll probably watch it for the rest of my life and I'll never forget having Ewing on my chest. I know this may sound greedy, but we wanted to repeat and fell short and weren't happy with it. You just have to deal with it though, but it was still an accomplishment having only 14 boys.

**CALLAHAN:** Your also a pretty good golfer I hear? What's your best round?

**KACZOR:** I shot an 81 on a 18 hole par 72 course before and a 34 on a 9 hole par 36. I have a pretty good drive. That's about all I can do. I get a birdie putt on just about every green, I just can't finish it. I can drive it 250 yards consistently and I've hit it 290 yards before.

**CALLAHAN:** What's the best course you've ever golfed before?

**KACZOR:** The best course is here in Ewing. People from all around here come to golf it, because there aren't very many close one's around. The toughest one I've ever golfed though is Meadowlark in Kearney. I think there's a curse on that course for me, because I couldn't do anything there.



# Recruiting Notebook

## Pair visit Nebraska on their own dime

by Mike Matya

Nebraska's 2010 recruiting class is filling up fast, with a handful of spots, at best, still open. There were two unofficial visitors to the Huskers' home game with Kansas State who paid their own way to look over the Big Red's program. Both are high on NU after their trips.

Boulder, Colo., Fairview High athlete **KENNY BELL** traveled to Lincoln right after his team's 10-7 win over Columbine in the 5A state playoffs. He does not have an NU offer yet.

"Coach (**TED**) **GILMORE** asked me to come out, so I packed up quickly after my game on Friday and flew out to Nebraska. It was great. I had a lot of fun. I'd say it was a '9' or '10.' It was a great trip. I loved it, and I'm very excited



JOE BURGESS

about Nebraska now."

Bell was offered by Colorado and Texas Tech after attending summer camps at their campuses, and he added those offers to ones from Minnesota, Idaho, Colorado

State and Arizona State. Prior to his NU trip, he had taken official visits to Minnesota and Texas Tech. The 6-foot-2, 175-pounder was asked to compare the three stops.

"I mean, Minnesota and Texas Tech were phenomenal and I loved it, but the environment in Lincoln was something else. There were fans everywhere eight hours before the game, and everyone was so friendly. Then, walking out to the field before the game, people knew who I was and they were slapping hands with me.

"I'm hoping to pick up an offer from Nebraska so I can get back up there. It's an exciting atmosphere, absolutely."

On the collegiate level, Bell could project to either side of the ball. He has been a running back, quarterback, receiver, cornerback, safety, punt and kick returner, and a punter for Fairview.

Also in attendance was Florissant, Mo., McCluer North offensive lineman **JOE BURGESS**. He was said to have a Husker offer early in the process, but other recruits may be a higher priority for the few remaining slots in this class.

Overall, his trip went very well, according to Burgess, and Nebraska is at the top of his list.

"I loved it, it was awesome," Burgess aid. "I thought the game was awesome - the energy of the crowd - I've been to a few other games, but nothing like that."

The 6-foot-6, 300-pound Burgess also has offers from Indiana, Kansas State, Tulsa and Vanderbilt. **N**

### 2010 Nebraska Commitment List (16)

Name (Rivals.com ranking)	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown (School)
Walker Ashburn ★★ ★	DE	6-3	245	River Ridge, La. (John Curtis)
Curtis Carter ★★ ★ ★	ATH	5-10	161	Stonewall, La. (North De Soto)
Jake Cotton	ATH	6-7	265	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
Quincy Enunwa	WR	6-2	200	Moreno Valley, Calif. (Rancho Verde)
Ciante Evans ★★ ★	CB	5-11	170	Arlington, Texas (Juan Seguin)
Tyler Evans ★★	ATH	6-2	180	Waverly, Neb. (Waverly)
Tyler Gabbert ★★ ★ ★	QB	6-0	190	Ballwin, Mo. (Parkway West)
Jay Guy ★★ ★	DT	6-1	300	Aldine, Texas (Eisenhower)
Chase Harper ★★ ★ ★	TE	6-6	248	Carsicana, Texas (Navarro JC)
Harvey Jackson ★★ ★	DB	6-2	185	Missouri City, Texas (Hightower)
Joshua Mitchell ★★ ★ ★	DB	5-11	165	Corona, Calif. (Eleanor Roosevelt)
Mike Moudy ★★ ★	OL	6-7	291	Castle Rock, Colo. (Douglas County)
Tobi Okuyemi ★★ ★	DE	6-3	250	Plymouth, Minn. (Wayzata)
Andrew Rodriguez ★★ ★ ★	OT	6-6	300	Aurora, Neb. (Aurora)
Chase Rome ★★ ★ ★	DE	6-3	290	Columbia, Mo. (Rock Bridge)
Donovan Vestal ★★ ★	DE	6-5	240	Arlington, Texas (Bowie)

### 2011 Nebraska Commitment List (2)

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown (School)
Tyler Moore	OL	6-6	290	Clearwater, Fla. (Countryside)
Ryne Reeves	OL	6-3	286	Crete, Neb. (Crete)





## DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS

BY JOHN TALMAN  
RECRUITING PUBLISHER,  
HUSKERSILLUSTRATED.COM

# Rewards await Huskers in Dallas

**IT'S MORE THAN** just a chance at a BCS bowl game or the opportunity to add a conference title to the trophy case.

Because the game is in Arlington, Texas, within the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex – seemingly the most popular city for out-of-state recruiting by NU – it's big.

It doesn't hurt for the name Nebraska to be flashed around the city for a few days.

It's big because commits like Arlington Bowie defensive end Donovan Vestal and Arlington Seguin corner Ciente Evans are close come game day if they want to make the trip. Not to mention the fact those commits have friends and younger teammates who will likely be recruited. Their ease of access to go watch the Huskers and the Longhorns do battle and get a glimpse of the possibility of playing for Nebraska is obviously turned up a notch.

Frankly, if you're Nebraska, this is an opportunity to get your name out to one of the most heavily recruited cities in the entire country. It's a chance for the staff to show the city of Dallas how they feature past players who left the Lone Star State for the Cornhusker state. Prospects, coaches, and parents can see what kind of impact former Plano, Texas, Senior High School star Rex Burkhead is having on his team in year one.

It's also an opportunity for other prospects to see another true freshman in the backfield from down the road at Euless Trinity High School – Dontrayevous

Robinson. It doesn't hurt to see those two running backs being coached in the title game, in Dallas, by NU running backs coach Tim Beck – a former area head coach.

You get the picture.

Bo Pelini said he didn't want to talk about the game until after Colorado.

However, he probably understands how nice it is that the conference championship is smack dab in the middle of a city the Huskers have spent a lot of time in signing prospects since the class of 2008. At least seven prospects signed by NU since that first class of Pelini's were from the Metroplex.

Not to mention, the Huskers have put out offers to at least seven prospects already within the DFW area for the upcoming class of 2011. They recently had another Arlington prospect, quarterback Jalen Brown from Sam Houston High School, make an unofficial visit this year. The junior has the Huskers in the lead to this point.

So how big is this opportunity for exposure?

Huge.

In this age of recruiting, the Huskers need all the help they can get competing with schools much closer to the talent pool that is the state of Texas. Oklahoma, LSU, Texas, and Texas A&M are always going to get many of the top 100 prospects in the state.

But an early December game

in Arlington, a chance at a Big 12 championship in Bo Pelini's second year as head coach at Nebraska, and all of this in a city that may be the most vital for future success in terms of recruiting? Yeah, it's big. It's big because it helps Nebraska get in the head of a prospect for just a moment longer when he opens up his mailbox to find a scholarship offer with a big red "N" on it.

Let's take it a step further.

Should Nebraska find itself in the Cotton Bowl after the Big 12 title game, it gets better. With bowl practices, more time will be spent in the area. NU coaches have a chance to catch up with high school coaches in the talent-rich city.

It's another opportunity for Nebraska to be seen in north Texas – what every Big 12 North school wants.

I'm not trying to downplay the importance of the game itself. Obviously we've seen what winning in general has done for recruiting, as more and more recruits see that Nebraska isn't an afterthought but a program on the rise and worth looking at.

What I'm saying is that considering the population differences and the history of which areas Nebraska hits the hardest in recruiting, this game is big on a much deeper level.

If recruiting is the lifeblood of the program, a game in "Big D" certainly assists in getting the blood flowing a little easier from Dallas up north to Lincoln. **N**



# Volleyball

KORI COOPER

BY BOB HAMAR

## Cooper leader behind Huskers' new attitude

**N**o one is happier to be back on the volleyball court than Nebraska's Kori Cooper.

But as happy as Cooper is to be back, her teammates are equally thrilled to have her

contributing at a high level.

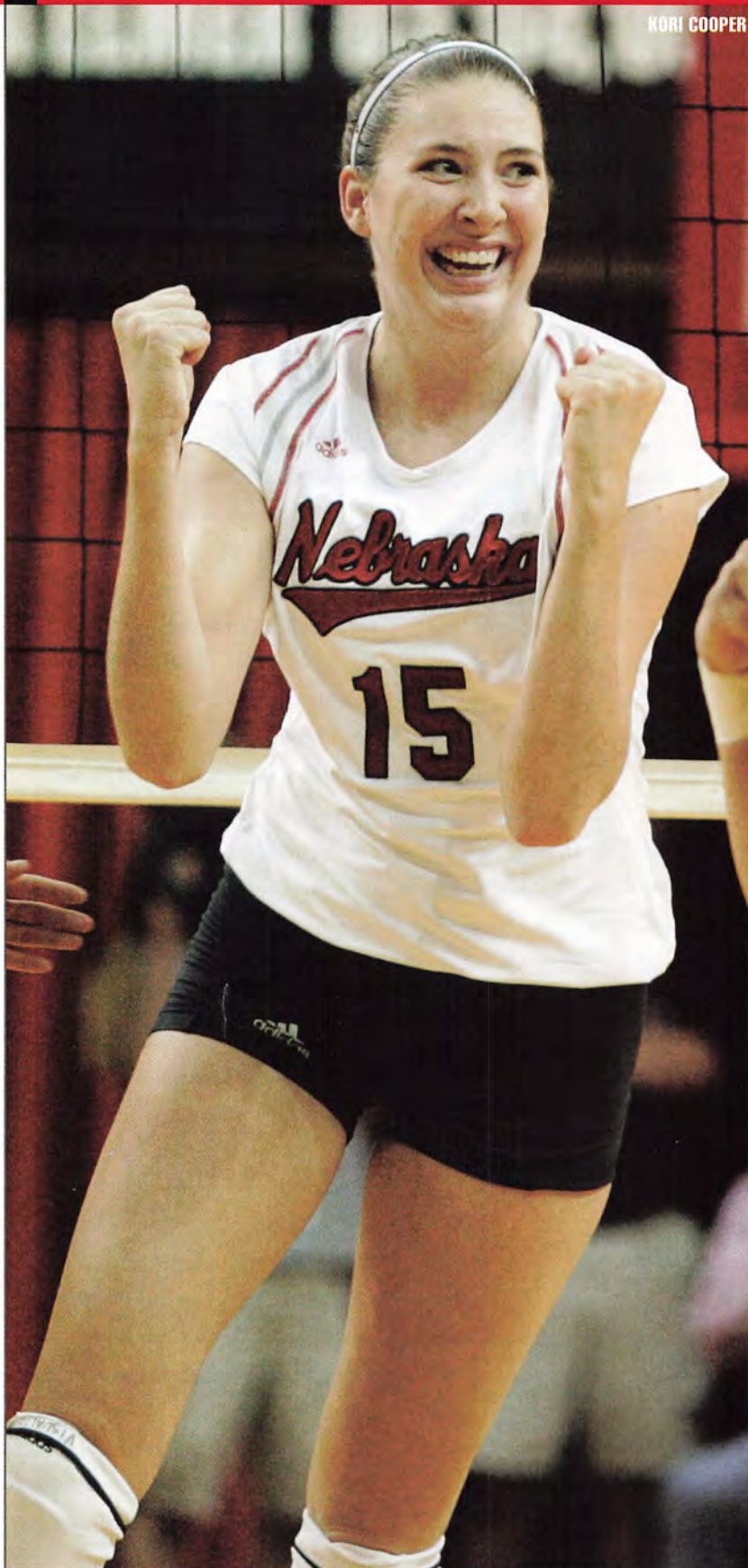
"This year has been obviously a roller coaster ride," Nebraska libero Kayla Banwarth said. "To have her come and be smiling every day and being encouraging every day was really important for this team because we needed that."

And Cooper was up to the task. The senior middle blocker, who blew her knee out late last season, was in and out of the lineup early this year as she recovered from her injury. She's back now and may be even better than ever with a Big 12 Conference best .369 hitting efficiency.

"She has persevered through a lot," Nebraska coach John Cook said. "I think she might be having more fun than she's ever had right now as this team is developing and she's a part of that."

"I think she's probably grown more this year than she has in her other three years here."

Cooper also blew a knee out early in her senior year of high school. That experience





helped her get ready for her senior year of college volleyball.

"I knew I'd come back from it before," Cooper said. "Here I am, having blown out both my knees and still playing Division I college volleyball."

Cooper said she couldn't have made it back without the support of her coaches, teammates and the Nebraska trainers.

"It's just part of my journey as a player," Cooper said. "It was challenging, but also rewarding because now I am getting to play. I've had my ups and downs as a player. For me it's just all part of the growing experience."

Not that Cooper was a selfish player, but Cook said she was focused on herself early this season as she was going through rehab and trying to get back on the court. Once she got through that, she was able to focus on her teammates.

"At some point she decided it's about the team," Cook said. "That's been one of the keys for us turning the corner a little bit and I think it's helped her become a better player."

"Obviously she did that last year, but she didn't have a choice. This year there were choices for her. That's why I think she's grown so much."

Cooper and her Husker teammates went through Senior Night on Nov. 28 at the NU Coliseum. Senior Night was rather short this year because Cooper is the only senior on the team.

She came into the program back in the winter of 2006 and played a part in the Huskers winning the national championship that next fall. Rachel Holloway and Brooke Bartek were also freshmen that season, but Holloway opted to leave the sport after her sophomore season and Bartek transferred to Kentucky.

Banwarth said this year's Huskers wouldn't be where they're at without Cooper leading the way. Her play on the

court is important, but her leadership and attitude off the court may carry even more weight for this year's team.

"She's fun," Banwarth said. "She makes people smile. She makes it fun to come to practice every day. She's really like the emotional leader. She's going to get us fired up for a match. If we're having a bad day she's going to make us have a good day. She's just that kind of a person."

Now Cooper and the Huskers are looking to close out the season strong. They went into the final week of the regular season with a 21-6 record.

On the other hand, the Huskers are who they are because of those losses.

"It hasn't been a typical Nebraska volleyball season," Cooper said. "I mean prior to this year I'd had six losses in my career and now we've had six losses this year."

"Honestly, I think that happening has probably been a good thing for this team. It helped the leadership develop. It's just part of the journey this year."

## NEW PERSONALITY

Cook has been looking for a strong finish all season long, but even the Nebraska coach has been surprised by just how well the Huskers have played in November as they head into the NCAA Tournament.

Cook said the personality of the team has changed late in the season.

"A month ago I didn't think it could happen at the level that it has happened," Cook said. "It's playing with joy and passion. It's fun and love and trust, all those things. Watching our team play right now, personality-wise it's much different than it was a month or six weeks ago."

## LEARNING FROM SUH

Cook, who has said he'd still like to be a football coach, has been tremendously impressed by Nebraska defensive tackle

Ndamukong Suh. It's not just his play on the field that Cook has noticed, but also his leadership.

Cook said he saw Suh on television talking to kicker Alex Henery when he missed a field goal and he held that up as an example for his players. He said the best leadership has to come from the players themselves.

"That's what great leaders do and our kids have figured it out," Cook said. "That's how they're leading. What you do off the court, behind the scenes, in practice, in the locker room, that's what's so important. We're not part of that, you're not part of that, but that's where you make huge gains in that department." **N**

### 2009 VOLLEYBALL SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	Red/White Scrimmage, 7 p.m.
Aug. 28-29	Runza/AVCA Showcase
Aug. 28	*vs. Michigan, L, 3-0
Aug. 29	*vs. Minnesota, W, 3-2
Sept. 1	Creighton, W, 3-0
Sept. 4-5	at LSU Tournament
Sept. 4	vs. UL-Lafayette, W, 3-0
	at LSU, W, 3-2
Sept. 5	vs. Tulane, W, 3-0
Sept. 10-13	Ameritas Players Challenge
Sept. 10	Virginia, W, 3-0
Sept. 11	BYU, W, 3-1
Sept. 13	^UCLA, L, 3-2
Sept. 16	Texas Tech, W, 3-0
Sept. 19	at Colorado, W, 3-0
Sept. 23	at Texas A&M, L, 3-2
Sept. 30	at Oklahoma, W, 3-0
Oct. 7	Kansas, W, 3-0
Oct. 10	Kansas State, W, 3-0
Oct. 14	at Baylor, W, 3-0
Oct. 17	at Missouri, W, 3-1
Oct. 21	Iowa State, L, 3-2
Oct. 24	Oklahoma, W, 3-1
Oct. 28	at Texas Tech, W, 3-0
Oct. 30	at Texas, L, 3-0
Nov. 4	Missouri, W, 3-0
Nov. 7	at Iowa State, W, 3-0
Nov. 13	Texas A&M, W, 3-0
Nov. 18	Baylor, W, 3-0
Nov. 21	at Kansas, W, 3-0
Nov. 25	at Kansas State, 7 p.m.
Nov. 28	Colorado, 7 p.m.
Dec. 4-5	NCAA 1st/2nd Rounds, TBA
Dec. 11-12	*NCAA Regionals, TBA
Dec. 17	NCAA Semifinals, Finals
	* at Qwest Center, Omaha
	^ at Bob Devaney Sports Center



# Basketball

ESHAUNTE JONES

BY BRIAN ROSENTHAL

## Jones contributing for Huskers on both ends of court



**T**he last thing Eshaunte “Bear” Jones needed during the summertime was another health-related setback.

Jones, a 6-foot-4, 190-pound guard on the Nebraska men’s basketball team, was finally starting to find a groove. He’d missed most of his freshman season, earning a medical redshirt after playing four games, because he needed foot surgery.

Then, during his rehabilitation, Jones needed more surgery, this time because of a sports hernia. It wasn’t a long-term problem – Jones was out of action for about 10 days during the summer – but it didn’t exactly jibe with his plans of getting back in playing shape.

Particularly, Doc Sadler’s playing shape.

“Obviously, I hadn’t been doing a Doc practice,” Jones said, “and one thing about his practices is that you know you’re going to be more in shape than anybody else is.

“I didn’t have that.”

So the fact Jones, a redshirted freshman, has worked his way into Nebraska’s rotation is a sign of progress. He’s been among the first players off the bench in the Huskers early-season games, and he’s regarded as one of the team’s better perimeter shooters.

“The one thing he does do probably as good, if not better than anybody we’ve got, is shoot the basketball,” said Sadler, the Nebraska coach. “He definitely is a guy that we know needs to



score some points.”

But Jones’ ability to help prevent points is what’s earned him playing time.

Sadler said he was more impressed with Jones’ defense in Nebraska’s season-opening victory over South Carolina-Upstate than his offense. Jones played 18 minutes, scored nine points on 4-of-6 shooting and had five rebounds, two steals and an assist.

“He’s really starting to understand what we’re wanting to try to do,” Sadler said. “It’s becoming as important to him because I think he realizes that playing time increases with defensive execution.”

Senior Sek Henry said he’s seen a different player in Jones than the young man who arrived in Lincoln more than a year ago with a bad foot.

“When he had the foot injury, he couldn’t really practice like he wanted to,” Henry said. “He was really trying hard to give it all but he really couldn’t. Now, he doesn’t have any problems with it and you can see he’s a lot more comfortable on the court.

“He’s a very good shooter, and he has a desire to win, just like everybody else,” Henry said. “He’s long, so defensively, he can be a very good defender in deflecting balls. And he can help us with defensive rebounding.”

Jones is a native of Fort Wayne, Ind., who played at Hargrave Military Academy in Virginia for one season before joining the Huskers. He’d originally signed with Oregon State – which visits Lincoln in December – but was released from his letter of intent following a coaching change.

Jones scored nearly 1,800 points in high school, and he’s a viable 3-point threat, perhaps a player who can fill a void on the Husker roster with the graduation of long-distance shooter Paul Velandier.

“I think (Sadler) knows I’m a decent shooter who can help,” Jones said, “but the only thing I’m thinking about right now is the defensive end and just trying to stop someone.

“There’s so many assignments, help side, and then getting to your man and

scrambling on defense. That’s just what I’ve been trying to learn so I can get on the floor.”

## FRESHMEN WANT TO PLAY

Nebraska coach Doc Sadler visited with freshmen Adrien Coleman and Ray Gallegos after two exhibition games about the possibility of redshirting this season.

The decision, Sadler said, was up to the players. Coleman has told Sadler he definitely wants to play this season, and Sadler said Gallegos is also “leaning that way.”

Neither player saw minutes in Nebraska’s first two games – a victory over South Carolina-Upstate and a 69-55 loss at Saint Louis.

“I’m getting this thing down to my top four guards, and that’s who’s going to play,” Sadler said. “And if you get in that top four, you’re going to get good minutes. If not, then you’ll get the minutes that are left.”

## HUSKERS TO PUERTO RICO

Nebraska is scheduled to play in the eight-team Puerto Rico Tip-Off in November 2010 in San Juan.

Joining the Huskers in the tournament are North Carolina, West Virginia, Western Kentucky, Hofstra, Davidson, Minnesota and Vanderbilt.

## GRIFFIN ON NAISMITH LIST

Nebraska senior Kelsey Griffin was one of 50 players named to the Naismith Trophy pre-season watch list, announced by the Atlanta Tipoff Club.

Griffin, a 6-2 forward from Eagle River, Alaska, is a two-time first-team All-Big 12 selection and a 2010 All-America candidate. Earlier this year, Griffin was named to the pre-season All-Big 12 squad for the third time.

Griffin, the No. 1 active career rebounder in the Big 12 Conference and No. 3 active career scorer, led Nebraska to back-to-back NCAA Tournament appearances in 2007 and 2008, before missing the 2008-09 season with a foot injury.

## BOBER INJURED AGAIN

Nikki Bober’s career with the Nebraska women’s basketball team may be over.

The senior center from Murdock, Neb., has torn the ACL in her right knee for the second time in less than a year. In high school, Bober tore her left ACL.

Bober could qualify for a medical hardship that would allow her to return next season, but it’s possible her career is finished.

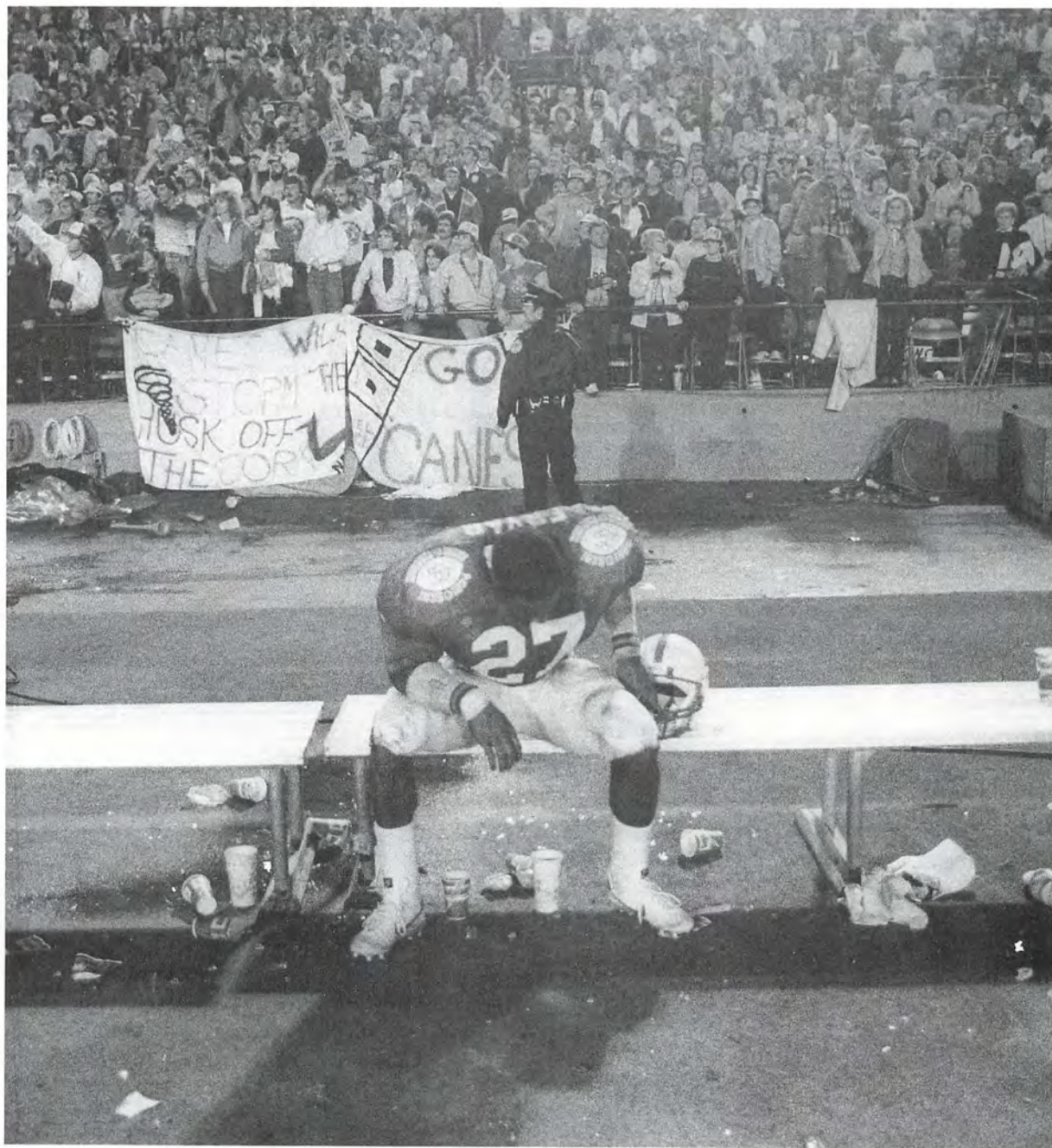
“I don’t know what to say other than I feel so sad for her. How much bad luck can you have?” Nebraska coach Connie Yori said.

“You don’t want to see that happen to anybody, but you particularly don’t want to see it happen to someone who’s given as much to our program as she has.” **N**

### 2009 MEN’S BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Nov. 6	Arkansas-Fort Smith (exh.), W, 86-66
Nov. 10	Hastings (exh.), W, 71-39
Nov. 14	South Carolina Upstate, W, 76-49
Nov. 18	at Saint Louis, L, 69-55
Nov. 21	TCU, W, 90-77
Nov. 24	UMKC, W, 70-48
Nov. 29	at USC, TBD
Dec. 2	Texas-Pan American, 7 p.m.
Dec. 6	at Creighton, TBD
Dec. 10	Chicago State, 7 p.m.
Dec. 12	Oregon State, TBD
Dec. 19	Jackson State, 7 p.m. at Las Vegas Classic
Dec. 22	vs. Tulsa, 7 p.m.
Dec. 23	vs. BYU or Nevada, 7 or 9:30 p.m.
Dec. 29	Southern Utah, 7 p.m.
Jan. 2	Maryland Eastern Shore, TBD
Jan. 5	Southeastern Louisiana, 7 p.m.
Jan. 9	at Texas A&M, 3 p.m., Big 12 Network
Jan. 13	Kansas, 8 p.m., ESPN2
Jan. 16	Iowa State, TBD
Jan. 23	at Missouri, 5 p.m., Big 12 Network
Jan. 27	at Colorado, TBD
Jan. 30	Oklahoma, 12:30 p.m., Big 12 Network
Feb. 2	Kansas State, 7 p.m., Big 12 Network
Feb. 6	at Kansas, 5 p.m., ESPN2
Feb. 10	Baylor, 8 p.m., ESPN2
Feb. 13	at Texas, 3 p.m., Big 12 Network
Feb. 17	at Kansas State, TBD
Feb. 20	Missouri, 5 p.m., Big 12 Network
Feb. 24	at Iowa State, TBD
Feb. 27	Texas Tech, 3 p.m., Big 12 Network
Mar. 2	Colorado, TBD
Mar. 6	at Okla. St., 12:30 p.m., Big 12 Network at Big 12 Championship
Mar. 10-13	at Kansas City, Mo. (Sprint Center)





**AGONY OF DEFEAT** — A disconsolate Irving Fryar sits on the bench in the Orange Bowl stadium. In his final two seasons, Nebraska lost only twice, at Penn State in the third game in 1982 and against Miami in Orange Bowl game on the night of Jan. 2, 1984. In between, the Cornhuskers won 22 consecutive games, including the first 12 in 1983. They also were ranked No. 1 throughout that season and were trying to go wire-to-wire atop the polls, something that had never been done. Miami ended that quest, 31-30, after coach Tom Osborne opted for a two-point conversion with

48 seconds remaining. Though Nebraska was technically the host team, as Big Eight champion, the Orange Bowl was Miami's home, and Hurricanes' coach Howard Schnellenberger had rallied the support of south Florida. Even Orange Bowl officials, in yellow blazers, openly cheered for No. 4-ranked Miami. Fryar earned unanimous All-America honors that season, catching 40 passes for 780 yards and eight touchdowns. He caught five passes for 61 yards in the Orange Bowl game, though those numbers were not included in his official statistics.



# HUSKERS

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## GAMES REMEMBERED

### TEXAS 37, NEBRASKA 27

DEC. 7, 1996 • AT ST. LOUIS, MO.



It was Texas hold 'em **JOHN MAKOVIC** style. The Longhorns coach went all in with just over 2 minutes remaining in the first Big 12 Championship game at the Trans World Dome.

Texas faced fourth-and-1 at its own 28-yard line, protecting a 30-27 lead. The expectation was that Makovic would call for quarterback

**JAMES BROWN** to line up his team

and try to draw the Cornhusker defense off-sides. Failing in that, Texas would take a time out and then punt the ball away.

Instead, Brown took the snap, faked a handoff and passed to a wide-open tight end, Derek Lewis, who carried to the Nebraska 11-yard line. The play covered 61 yards.

On the next play, **PRIEST HOLMES** carried into the end zone.

Holmes, a second-string running back, also scored the game's first touchdown, and one in between, finishing with 120 yards rushing, as the Longhorns gained 503 total yards.

Nebraska went into the game ranked No. 3 nationally in scoring defense and No. 4 in total defense, allowing averages of 10.5 points and 232.9 yards per game.

This time, the numbers didn't add up. The Cornhuskers ran 87 plays to 57 for Texas and had a two-to-one advantage in time of possession – 39:35 to 20:35.

The loss ended Nebraska's hopes of an unprecedented third consecutive national championship. The Cornhuskers had climbed back to No. 3 in the rankings, following a 19-0 loss at Arizona State, and would have gone to the Sugar Bowl to play No. 1 Florida State.

#### Texas 37, Nebraska 27

Nebraska	7	10	7	3	–	27
Texas	7	13	3	14	–	37

(T) Priest Holmes 5 run (Phil Dawson kick)

(N) DeAngelo Evans 2 run (Kris Brown kick)

(T) Dawson 49 field goal

(N) Brown 51 field goal

(T) Holmes 61 run (Dawson kick)

(N) Evans 23 run (Brown kick)

(T) Dawson 30 field goal

(T) Dawson 47 field goal

(N) Evans 6 run

(N) Brown 24 field goal

(T) Wayne McGarity 66 pass James Brown (Dawson kick)

(T) Holmes 11 run (Dawson kick)

**Attendance:** 63,109

As it turned out, Arizona State, which was No. 2 at the end of the regular season, would lose to Ohio State in the Rose Bowl, 20-17, and Florida State would lose a rematch with Florida, 52-20, in the Sugar Bowl.

**NU DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR CHARLIE MCBRIDE:** "We just didn't hold up our end. We just fell apart defensively. We probably made as many mistakes in one game as we did all season."

#### DO YOU REMEMBER?

► Texas capitalized on big plays, averaging 8.8 yards per snap, a record against Nebraska. The previous record was 8.56, set by Oklahoma in a 49-35 victory in 1950.

► One NFL draft analyst projected Cornhusker junior **GRANT WISTROM** as the fourth player to be selected if he chose to bypass his final season of eligibility. "I'm not leaving here without winning," Wistrom said after the game. Nebraska won the Orange Bowl game against Virginia Tech, but Wistrom returned and helped the Cornhuskers win another national title.



DEANGELO EVANS SCORES VS. TEXAS



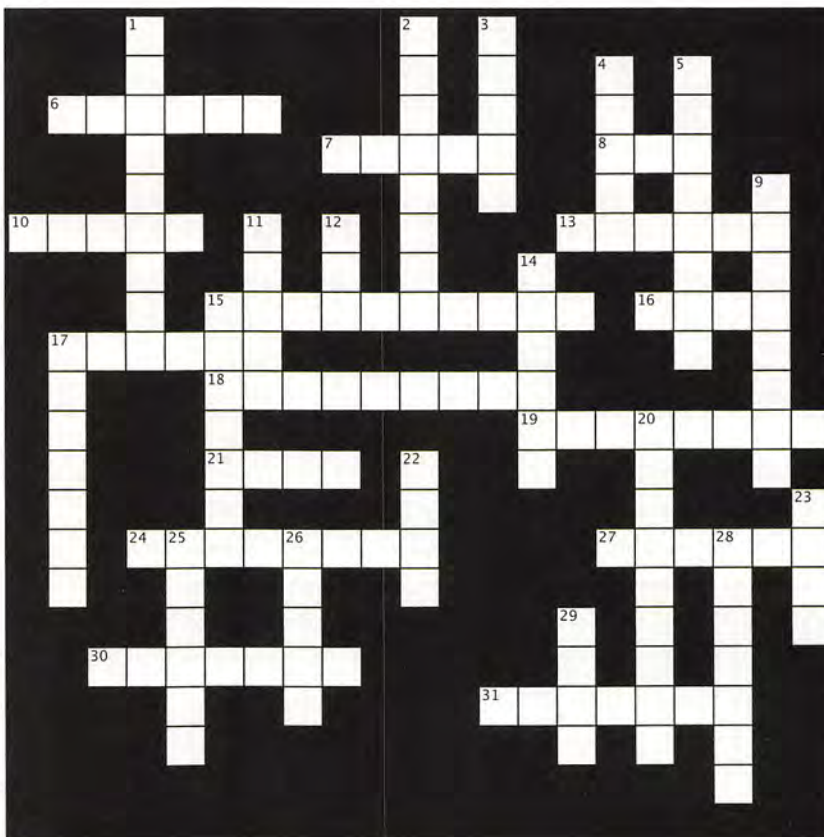
# CROSSWORD & TRIVIA

## ACROSS

6. 2009 Lou Groza Award semifinalist
7. Texas head coach
8. Network for Big 12 Championship game telecast
10. Texas quarterback
13. 2001 All-America guard
15. Ex-Husker cornerback now with Baltimore Ravens
16. Wears No. 80
17. Texas campus location
18. Texas conference before Big 12
19. 2008 Big 12 champion
21. Ex-Husker linebacker now with Tampa Bay Buccaneers
24. Texas Heisman Trophy winner (1977)
27. Texas bowl after 2008 season
30. Wears No. 44
31. Freshman kick returner

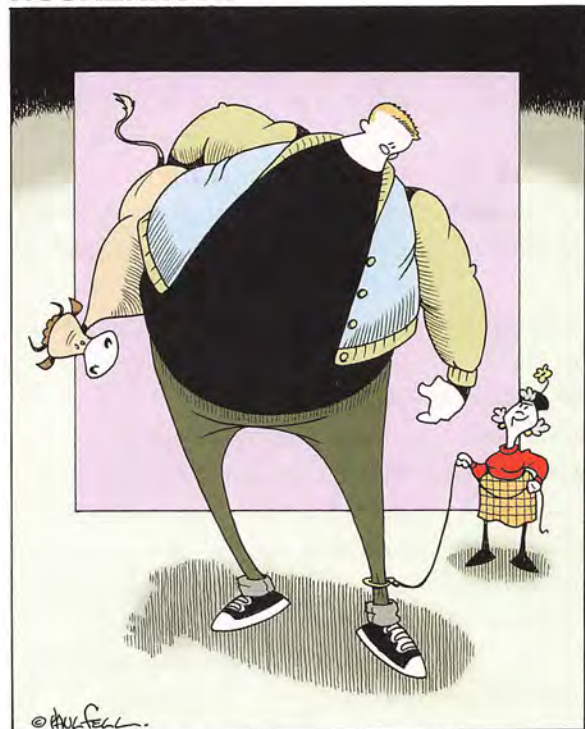
## DOWN

1. Texas nickname
2. 1971 Outland Trophy winner
3. Wears No. 49
4. 2010 non-conference opponent
5. Texas head coach before Brown
9. Texas Heisman Trophy winner (1998)
11. Quarterback missing season with injury
12. 2009 Lombardi Award finalist
14. Wears No. 81
15. 2009 College Football Hall of Fame inductee
17. Eric Hagg's home state
20. City for Big 12 Championship game
22. Leading rusher vs. Kansas State
23. Leading receiver vs. Kansas State
25. Leading tackler vs. Kansas State
26. Was head coach at both Nebraska and Texas
28. Secondary coach
29. Bo's older brother



Answers will appear in the January issue

## HUSKERNUTZ



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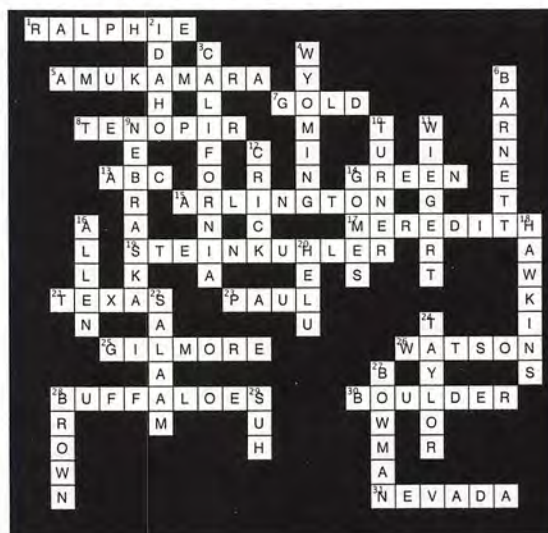
SEND IDEAS TO: Paul Fell Cartoons,

3215 Jamestown Lane, Lincoln, NE 68516

or email to: pfell@neb.rr.com



## NOV. 27 CROSSWORD SOLUTION







## THE FINAL WORD

BY MIKE BABCOCK

# Suh, Huskers make enough plays to win

**IT WAS AFTER** Nebraska's 28-20 victory against Colorado in Boulder. And it was pandemonium just outside the visitors' locker room, where coaches and players were interviewed.

Fans were interspersed among the coaches and players, lots of fans, cheering, trying to position themselves for autographs and pictures, and waving hand-made signs.

To understand one of the more elaborate signs, rewind to last season's game.

After Alex Henery kicked a school-record 57-yard field goal to give Nebraska the lead, Ndamukong Suh iced the 40-31 victory by intercepting a Cody Hawkins pass and returning it for a touchdown. On his way to the end zone, Suh stiff-armed Hawkins, shoving him to the ground.

And yes, Suh fired the ball against the fence in celebration.

So anyway, the hand-made sign included a photograph of Suh running over Hawkins.

Above the photo were the words:

**Air Fare** \$293

**Hotel/Car** \$312

**Watch Suh Do This Again**

Below the photo was:

**Priceless**

And at an angle in the bottom right corner was:

**Hi Mom**

The person who made the sign wore a No. 93 Suh jersey, half red and half white. She said to be sure to mention the "Hi Mom." She was Suh's older sister, Ngum.

And she was all smiles.

Her brother didn't return an interception for a touchdown this time. Early in the third quarter, he had his hands on a pass that was deflected by Jared Crick. But he couldn't hold on.

Nebraska fans, maybe a third of the official total at Folsom Field, 52,817, yelled "Suuuhhh," until the officials signaled incomplete. "I had my hands on the ball, should've made the play," Suh said. "But some unfortunate things happened, and I didn't.

"Then I came back around maybe two or three plays later and missed a sack."

That was the story of the game, according to Suh. "It was just collective things, of small plays where we were right there to make a play and we didn't do it," he said.

Well, actually, Nebraska made enough plays to win. And that's the bottom line.

But coach Bo Pelini wasn't happy about the effort, which will have to be considerably better when the Cornhuskers play Texas in the Big 12 Championship game at Arlington, Texas.

"I don't think that it'll be a problem, just go back and look at film," said Suh.

Film of the Colorado game will show a Nebraska team that made plays when it had to, including a 59-yard punt return for a touchdown to open the scoring, a 13-play, 80-yard touchdown drive to go up 28-14 with 6:43 remaining and defensive plays such as one Suh made late in the third quarter.

A 58-yard pass play, Colorado's longest of the season from scrimmage, had given the Buffaloes the ball deep in Nebraska territory, with the score 21-14. Colorado

lined up third-and-2 at the Cornhusker 17-yard line. Suh broke through and had his hands on quarterback Tyler Hansen, who threw the ball into the ground, just a few yards ahead of him. The ruling was intentional grounding. Suh was credited with a sack, for a 17-yard loss. A subsequent, 52-yard field goal missed wide left.

That was Nebraska's only sack, to go with four quarterback hurries (two credited to Suh), against a quarterback hardly the equal of Texas' Colt McCoy, a serious Heisman Trophy candidate.

Suh has drawn enough national attention to be considered McCoy's defensive equal. But he dismissed the Big 12 Championship game as an opportunity for him to make a Heisman statement. "I could care less about the Heisman. Like I said, it's a great honor," said Suh.

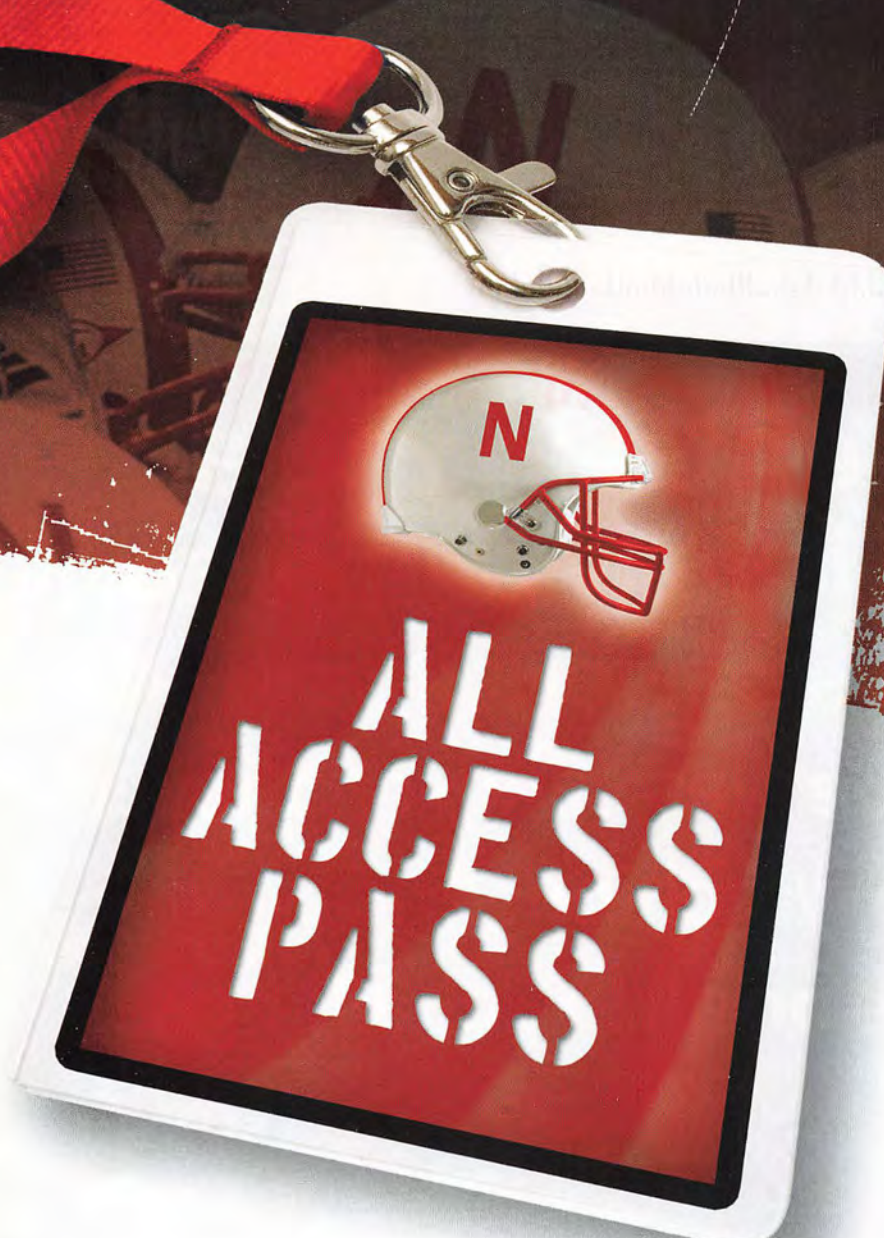
"But he's an offensive quarterback. Obviously, he's going to be up there (in voting). He plays for a great team, puts up great numbers, both running and passing. But I don't think it's a statement game. I just want to go out there and win. That'll be my statement, we go out there and win."

An argument could be made that Nebraska is the second-best team in the Big 12 at this point, in the wake of five consecutive victories. If the Cornhuskers are to upset Texas and derail its national-title hopes, they'll have to do it with defense, special teams and opportunistic offense.

Ngum Suh will make another sign, she said.

And she will take it to Arlington, Texas. **N**





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Excitement's in the air  
 The team is fully prepared  
 All the hours of work invested  
 People will be watching, oh they  
 definitely be watching. And we are  
 ready to take on all the challenges

#### 2009 Nebraska Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Location	Time/Results
Sat, Sep 05	Florida Atlantic	Memorial Stadium	W, 49-3
Sat, Sep 12	Arkansas State	Memorial Stadium	W, 38-9
Sat, Sep 19	at Virginia Tech	at Blacksburg, VA	L, 15-16
Sat, Sep 26	Louisiana-Lafayette	Memorial Stadium	W, 55-0
Thu, Oct 08	at Missouri *	at Columbia, MO	W, 27-12
Sat, Oct 17	Texas Tech *	Memorial Stadium	L, 10-31
Sat, Oct 24	Iowa State *	Memorial Stadium	L, 7-9
Sat, Oct 31	at Baylor *	at Waco, TX	W, 20-10
Sat, Nov 07	Oklahoma *	Memorial Stadium	W, 10-3
Sat, Nov 14	at Kansas *	at Lawrence, KS	W, 31-17
Sat, Nov 21	Kansas State *	Memorial Stadium	W, 17-3
Fri, Nov 27	at Colorado *	at Boulder, CO	W, 28-20
Sat, Dec 5	Big 12 Championship	Arlington, TX (Dallas Cowboys New Stadium)	7 p.m., ABC

\* Conference games



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